

**C**onvinced that industrialization had caused the degradation of work and the destruction of the environment, the Arts and Crafts Movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries emphasized simple but charming architecture. To pursue their goal, the Arts and Crafts reformers chose art as their medium, specifically the hand-crafted design of homes and furniture. Their goals were to restore pride through labor and overcome social ills.

The Arts and Crafts Movement inspired much of architect Frank Lloyd Wright's designs, though Wright believed in taking advantage of technology and machinery as long as it was under the architect's creative control.

Superintendents and their crews are well aware of the satisfaction achieved through craftsmanship and on-the-job creativity while taking advantage of the latest technology. They derive satisfaction from their work when creativity and intuition play key roles in what they're doing. Machinery is a secondary part of the equation that leads to a well-maintained course.

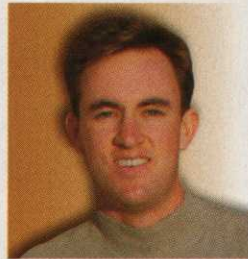
It's no coincidence that many of the greatest golf courses were designed during the 1920s, when the Arts and Crafts Movement changed the way America looked at itself. Nor is it a coincidence that the Arts and Crafts Movement is enjoying a renaissance today for many of the reasons that gave it flight in the 1890s.

Contemporary golf architecture has long since drifted from the ideals established by the Arts and Crafts Movement. Back then, if natural features did not exist, the master architects and their crafty construction crews created character in their designs. The extensive time they devoted to each project gave them a sense of artistic accomplishment. They used machinery only to finish the work. Even with road scrapers and other technology, the classic architects crafted contours that looked natural instead of machine made.

Today's designs are restricted by machinery more than most people realize. The lack of integrity and interest in many finished products is apparent to golfers. When golfers talk about knowing greatness when they see

## For the Love of Simplicity in Design

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



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it, many of them can never pinpoint what it is about some courses that exude character. However, manufactured-looking designs nearly always fail to rate as high as those that appear natural.

John Ruskin, an Oxford University professor and one of the first to explain the Arts and Crafts Movement's ideals, believed that building designers of his era had become anonymous laborers. Returning to more handwork would restore character to architecture and the arts. The qualities of asymmetry, irregularity, roughness and naturalness — the same qualities that make the classic golf courses so distinct — compelled people to embrace the Arts and Crafts Movement.

The golf course restoration rage is an offshoot of the Arts and Crafts Movement's ideals of simplicity, craftsmanship and a search to rediscover integrity in design. But will modern architecture ever cling to the values that made the classic courses worth restoring — the love of crafting features by hand?

Only time will tell, but if the satisfaction superintendents and crews take from their hands-on creativity is any indication, maybe the architect of the 21st century will get out of his office and into the dirt. Maybe he'll give shapers the freedom to handcraft features to mask the use of massive machinery.

Maybe architects will return their attention to detail and it becomes infectious? Maybe they will inspire new levels of thought and passion from those working for them, those maintaining their finished designs, and most of all, the golfers they're designing for? In the sainted names of those who created their designs with genuine craftsmanship, let's hope so.

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