

Jack Holt holds out his fingers and counts the number of golf course superintendents who have passed through Pebble Beach Golf Links in the time he has worked there. Holt needs both hands to add them up.

"Seven," he announces, after taking a minute to recall the superintendents' names.

Then Holt pauses, reflecting on the three decades he has spent at Pebble Beach Golf Resorts. This month, the 60-year-old marks his 30th year at the resort, having served 28 of them as the assistant superintendent at Pebble Beach Golf Links.

"I don't know how that happened," Holt says. "It doesn't seem possible. It wasn't my intention to be here for 30 years. Time goes so quickly."

While he didn't intend to stay at Pebble Beach that long, Holt has no regrets. And he has no regrets about being an assistant superintendent for 28 years. Even though the superintendent's job became available several times during his tenure, Holt was content to stay put as the assistant. He admits he'd rather not deal with the responsibility and pressure that comes with being the superintendent of one of the greatest golf courses in the world.

"This is the level I feel the most comfortable with," Holt says without apology. "And I've invested myself completely."

Holt's is a refreshing viewpoint. In today's world — and that includes the golf course maintenance world — it seems everyone is aiming to make it to the top of their profession because society dictates that's what we should do. It doesn't matter that many people don't even know what's at the top — they just want to get there and earn the money and prestige that comes with it.

Now, there's nothing wrong with wanting to be at the top of your profession, providing you can stand there strong. But there's also nothing wrong with not wanting to make it to the top, and being content with a job you know you can do well. That's Holt.

It's not that Holt doesn't hold high career

Longtime Assistant Doesn't Look Back

BY LARRY AYLWARD



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aspirations. He does — to be the best assistant superintendent he can be today and tomorrow at Pebble Beach. Even after 30 years, Holt will tell you there are always new things to learn.

While Holt never received a turfgrass degree, he says he's received a top education in agronomy from the University of Pebble Beach. It's the knowledge that Holt has gathered over the years that makes him so valuable, says his boss, superintendent Chris Dalhamer.

"When you have a guy with that much experience, you can't put a price on it," Dalhamer adds.

Holt likes to think of himself as Dalhamer's caddy. Dalhamer will be the first to tell you there have been numerous times he was glad he listened to Holt's skilled advice.

What impresses Dalhamer as much about Holt's knowledge of Pebble Beach is how much he adores the place. Funny thing, when Holt graduated from high school, he longed to get away from the Monterey, Calif., peninsula, where he grew up and where Pebble Beach is located. So he joined the Navy for four years and did two tours in Vietnam. But upon returning home, Holt realized it was where he wanted and needed to be.

"Sometimes you have to be away from something to find out how much you really love it," he says.

Holt built and sold driftwood furniture (a hot commodity in the 1970s) for several years before getting a job as a greenkeeper at Spyglass in 1980. Two years later, he transferred to Pebble Beach Golf Links, where he has worked four U.S. Opens.

Holt had chances to leave, but he realized the good thing he had going at Pebble Beach. "I can't see myself doing anything else," he says.

Pebble Beach wouldn't be the same without him.

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