

Join the campaign for new Meridian™ insecticide.

There's a groundswell afoot. Everyone seems to be excited about new Meridian™ insecticide. Even some unlikely constituents like turfgrasses, shrubs and trees. Why the enthusiasm? Meridian brings a new active ingredient to turf that offers preventive and curative control of grubs and other soil and foliar insects at low rates. Meridian's broad-spectrum control and speed of activity make it an outstanding choice for trees and shrubs too. Join our grass roots campaign. Elect to use new Meridian.



Important: Always read and follow label instructions before buying or using this product.
©2007 Syngenta. Syngenta Professional Products, Greensboro, NC 27419.
Meridian™ and the Syngenta logo are trademarks of a Syngenta Group Company.



Dear Hootie, I can't believe we won't be sharing these letters anymore since you stepped down as Augusta National chairman last summer. And the apparent sensibility of your successor begs the question: What am I, as a columnist, to do with a seemingly level-headed man like Billy Payne?

He won't lash out at "that woman," and I get the feeling he's going to leave the course alone, or as some insiders are quietly telling folks, he might even undo some of the changes made by you.

Hootie, let's be honest here; the course you were handed as chairman looks nothing like the one you left for Payne and the members to, uh, enjoy.

In that touching American corporate tradition of leaving problems for the next CEO to deal with, your seven-year tenure running the club and Masters passed with massive changes to the course, millions spent, and the result?

The result was a complete departure from Bobby Jones' original and inspired vision. Worse, it's no longer just a few of us fringe lunatics saying it.

Did you see what a six-time Masters winner and club member wrote in *Golf Digest* last month?

"Is it the golf course with the design principles that Bobby Jones and Alister Mackenzie intended?" Jack Nicklaus asks himself in front of 1.5 million readers. "Absolutely not. Augusta was generous off the tee, which made it great for everyday member play," Nicklaus continues. "But to score — to really play golf — you had to position the drive to get a good angle at the green. It was a second-shot golf course.

"Now the tee shot is more restricted. Trees and new bunkering have narrowed the landing areas, making Augusta a tight course with few angles or options," Nicklaus says. "I know the changes were made to provide an increased challenge for modern pros and keep them from overpowering the course, but it has taken the charm out of the Jones/Mackenzie design."

Oh Hootie, we all know you were doing your best. It's just that, well, your best will not be viewed kindly by history.

After all, the Augusta design changes ushered in a dreadful era that saw many Mona Lisa's disfigured so the United States Golf Association

From The Golden Age, With Love

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



HISTORY MIGHT
RIDICULE HOOTIE
JOHNSON FOR
DESIGN CHANGES
TO AUGUSTA,
BUT AT LEAST
HE ADDRESSED
THE BALL

could pretend that distance wasn't making a mess of the playing values that were largely protected for, oh, about 200 years.

Time has a funny way of revealing lesser moments in the game's history. That mysterious fascination with turn-of-the-century geometric designs was forgotten when the Tillinghasts and MacKenzies came along in the 1920s. Today's "minimalist" movement has made the Robert Trent Jones legacy of clover-leaf bunkers and tough-but-fair layouts look tired to all but the real-estate developers who milked the "signature" design concept.

We're not even removed yet from this era of change-the-course-to-protect-the-ball-manufacturer's-bottom-line, and already memories are souring.

But here's the good news, Hootie.

You were on the record as saying you didn't like doing this and you wished someone would do something about the ball. You're free and clear.

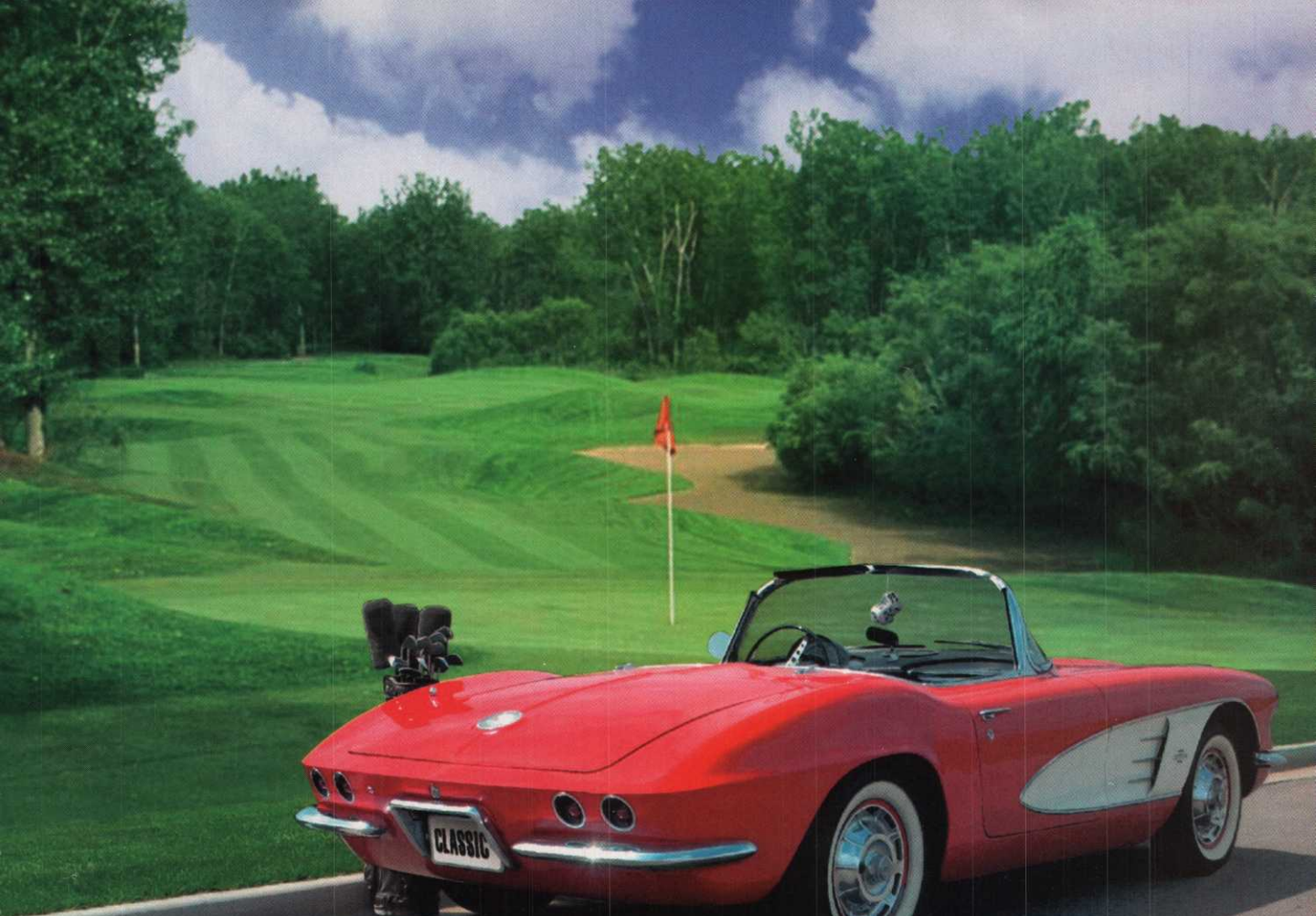
Hopefully, Billy Payne can tidy up some of the mundane course design modifications that you and Tom Fazio made. Why, we might even start to look back fondly on these years of a Masters chairman speaking his mind.

But we can never forgive you for those trees down the right of 11 and 15, or for the letters to the past champions, or for giving Martha the time of day, or for ... well anyway, some of us will always remember that you were never shy in pointing out why you were making changes to Bobby Jones' vision. You weren't doing it to leave your mark, but because you thought it was the best way to deal with a problem that the governing bodies refused to solve.

Yours in doing something about the ball,

Geoff

*Geoff Shackelford can be reached at
geoffshac@aol.com*



*It's hard
to beat a*

CLASSIC

Trimec® Classic Broadleaf Herbicide

- First product *ever* formulated for turf professionals
- The original “3-Way”
- Best known brand in the history of selective broadleaf weed control
- Low odor since 1995
- Premix formulated as a complex
- The superintendent’s favorite for over 30 years

Reliable, Dependable, Predictable



800-821-7925
trimec.com

Trimec® is a registered trademark of PBI/Gordon Corporation



Hole of the

▶ Hole #2 | Bidermann Golf Course | Wilmington, Delaware



Month

Hole Stats

Distance: 488 yards

Par 5

The Turf

Green: A1/A4 Bentgrass

Fairway: Bentgrass/
Poa annua mix

Bidermann Golf Course opened in 1965 after founding member George Weymouth and owner of Winterthur estate Henry F. du Pont agreed to expand upon the estate's 9-hole golf course. The course was rebuilt using six of the existing green sites by architect Dick Wilson and sits prominently on the Winterthur Museum & Country Estate. Named after du Pont's accountant, Antoine Bidermann, the course joined the Vicmead Hunt Club in 1977 to offer a full-service country club to members.

"We strive to present our members and their guests with the most complete golf experience in the Delaware Valley," says golf course superintendent Jon Urbanski.

Bidermann's second hole is the first par 5 of the course with a landing area shortly beyond the first set of fairway bunkers. The hole is well-guarded with three greenside bunkers and is bordered by native fescue roughs.

Urbanski and his crew of 22 supplement pesticide applications with cultural controls such as topdressing, aerification and needletining of the greens to manage regional disease pressures.

The course experiences increased dollar spot pressure in late April and again in late September. To prevent outbreaks, Urbanski applies Emerald® fungicide on tees and fairways as his first and last fungicide application of the season.

Twenty of the 70 maintained acres of roughs and 50 acres of native meadow roughs are not treated with pre-emergent herbicide and are highly susceptible to crabgrass infestation. Urbanski's crew mixes Drive® herbicide with a spray adjuvant and applies it at 16 ounces per acre with a boom sprayer to control breakthroughs.

"Drive is our number one crabgrass postemergent control for roughs," says Urbanski. "The crabgrass wilts and dies after a few days and control is achieved with a single application."

To see past Holes of the Month, download a desktop image and more, visit www.turfacts.com.

Drive® herbicide delivers superior postemergent control of a broad spectrum of broadleaf and grassy weeds including crabgrass, clover and dandelions. For more information, contact your distributor or BASF at www.turfacts.com.



GOLFDOM'S HOLE OF THE MONTH IS MADE POSSIBLE BY:

 **BASF**

The Chemical Company



They champion

The PGA Golf Club
extolls the roll on its new
ultradwarf bermudagrass greens

BY LARRY AYLWARD, EDITOR IN CHIEF

Pardon Bud Taylor if he drops to his knees and plants a smooch on one of the new greens at the PGA Golf Club. Yes, Taylor, director of golf at the club, adores the recently renovated greens that much.

It has been almost a year since the PGA Golf Club's two golf courses in Port St. Lucie, Fla., were rebuilt and reseeded with Champion ultradwarf bermudagrass. Taylor is happier than a man who just scored a hole-in-one because the greens, which turn 1-year-old in July, are performing like a loaded Lexus. And when the greens are good, the golfers are content, which makes Taylor's job that much easier.

"When the greens are good, the hot dogs taste better, and the whole golfing experience is better," says Taylor, who's in his 11th year at the club, operated by PGA Golf Properties.

It was superintendent Dale Miller's idea to reseed the greens with Champion. Miller was hired by the PGA Golf Club to head the renovation, most of which has been completed. Miller, who left the club in March, says he has participated in about 30 golf course renovations throughout the country, mostly in the South. He has a toolbox full of his favorite gadgets to use in the process. When a course's greens require an overhaul, Miller grabs a bag of Champion ultradwarf bermudagrass from the box.

Champion, released in 1995, was the first ultradwarf cultivar in the country. It has been planted on 335 courses in 16 states, according to Champion Turf Farms, the Bay City, Texas-based breeder and marketer of the variety. "The nice thing about Champion is that it rivals bentgrass, but it's a Southern grass," Miller says.

The PGA Golf Club celebrated its 10th anniversary last year and made the announcement it would invest several million to redo the Tom Fazio-designed North and South courses, whose names were changed to the Ryder Course and the Wanamaker Course, after the renovation. Miller made the case that Champion should be used to renovate the greens. After hearing him out on the variety's benefits, the PGA Golf Club's brass, including Taylor, agreed with him.

Miller might know Champion better than most superintendents. He first used the variety on greens in the mid-1990s when he was the superintendent at Barton Creek Resort & Spa in Austin, Texas. That was almost two years before any other courses began using it, he says.

"I was rolling the dice a little bit at Barton

Champion

Creek when I put it in," Miller admits, saying he knew little about the variety then.

But now that he has used Champion on several courses, Miller believes it's a safe bet to achieve first-rate greens. He calls Champion a reliable variety that provides quality conditions throughout the year.

"I've carried Champion with me from golf course to golf course that I've renovated," Miller says. "And time and time again, every

place that I've helped renovate has had the same excellent results."

Miller says Champion can endure southern Florida's searing-hot summers as well as the region's cool winter nights. He is impressed with Champion's wear tolerance, which is attributable to its high density.

"It withstands traffic probably better than any grass I know," Miller says.

Continued on page 30



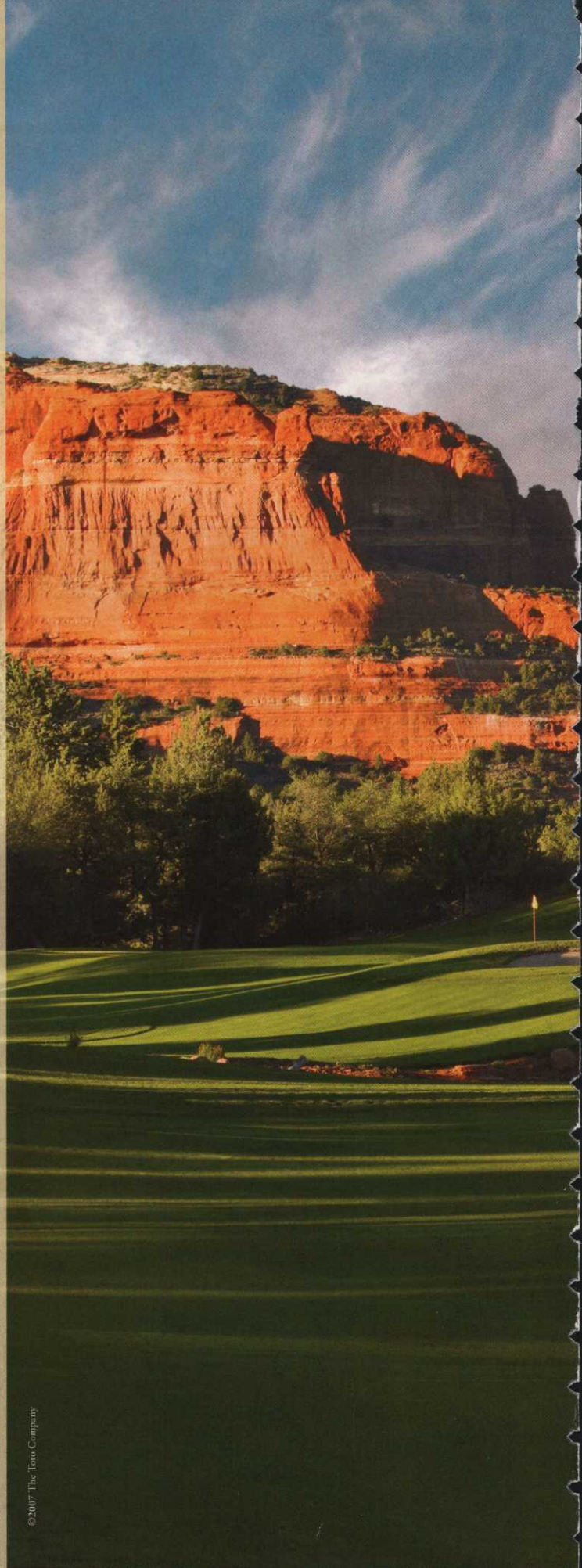
Bud Taylor (left), the PGA Golf Club's director of golf, is smiling because the club's new greens are performing admirably. At right is Dale Miller, the superintendent who suggested Champion bermudagrass for the renovation.

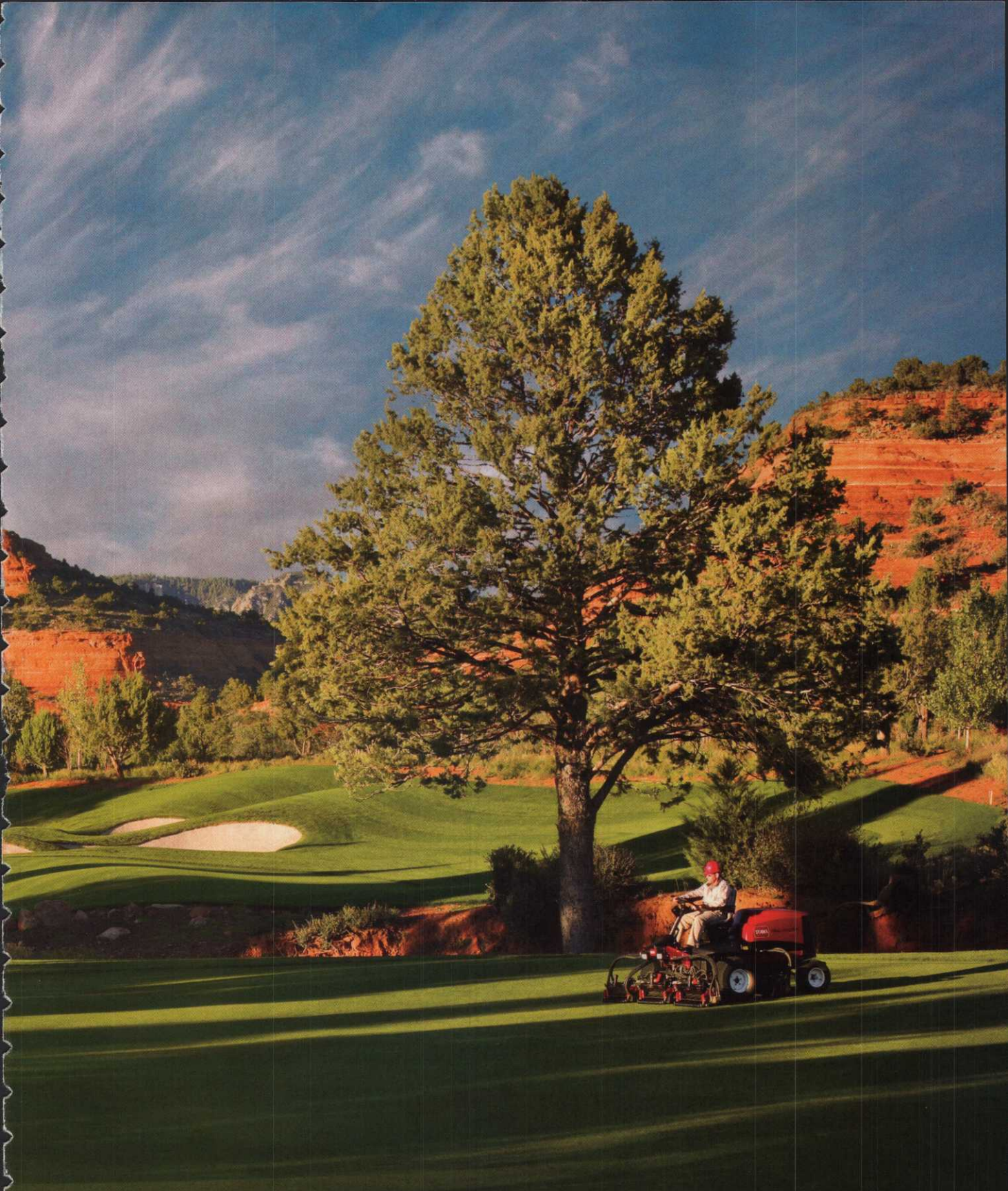
Hundreds of improvements.

The all-new Reelmaster® 5010 series fairway mowers from Toro® deliver exceptional quality of cut and aftercut appearance. Dual Precision Adjustment (DPA) cutting units make adjustments simple and more accurate. The cutting edges stay sharp two to three times longer, resulting in less maintenance. Optional accessories further enhance performance. An ergonomic operator station results in ease of use and provides improved operator comfort. The new Reelmaster 5010 series is designed to keep you out of the shop and out on the fairway.



Reelmaster® 5510





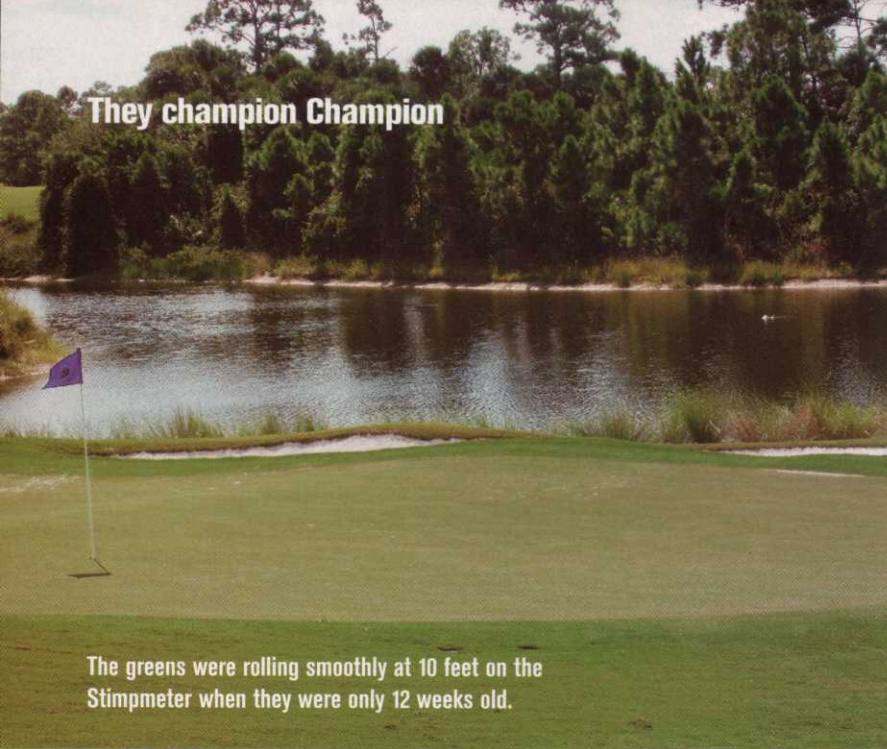
One great result.

Call 1-800-803-8676 or visit www.toro.com/fairways



Count on it.

They champion Champion



The greens were rolling smoothly at 10 feet on the Stimpmeter when they were only 12 weeks old.

"I don't miss trying to sell a golf course that's transitioning in or out of overseed."

BUD TAYLOR

Continued from page 27

According to Champion Turf Farms, the variety makes "a profusion of lateral stems, which provide very rapid recovery from injury."

The PGA Golf Club needed a durable variety to withstand the traffic from the organization's 1,300 members, not to mention the number of tournaments played on the courses. With Champion, the club was able to hold two tournaments only 13 weeks after the greens were seeded, a testament to the variety's sturdiness, says Taylor, adding that no bermudagrass variety has impressed him more.

The PGA Golf Club's clientele is impressed, too, Taylor says. "The people who have been here before notice a significant change," he adds.

An issue in the turfgrass selection for the greens renovation was whether to overseed. Champion made that decision easy because it's more cool-weather tolerant than other bermudagrass varieties and retains its color in the fall and winter. Hence, it does not require overseeding, which has given the club a leg up on the competition, Taylor says.

Not having to overseed gives the PGA Club an advantage at a time of the year when other golf courses close for overseeding. So there are no transition periods to worry about. Instead of overseeding in October and November, the club will have favorable turf conditions, rather than the in-between kind of conditions that most golf courses have at that time of year, Taylor and Miller say.

Not having to overseed not only makes superintendents and their maintenance crews happy, it pleases directors of golf like Taylor. Let's just say golfer complaints are down significantly in Taylor's department now that overseeding is a thing of the past.

"I don't miss trying to sell a golf course that's transitioning in or out of overseed," says Taylor, noting that guest concerns were always "significant" when overseeding was involved. "It was always a concern because we were at the mercy of the weather," he adds, noting that there is little margin for error in Florida when overseeding.

Last fall and winter, Taylor says the greens held their color well and playing conditions were as consistent as they have ever been. The greens retained their color, even after being frosted on a few cold winter nights.

It takes Champion-seeded greens about one year to mature, Miller says. That said, they grow in desirably quickly. The greens were rolling smoothly at 10 feet on the Stimpmeter when they were only 12 weeks old.

Before planting Champion on the Ryder and Wanamaker courses, the PGA Golf Properties tested the variety on the greens at the PGA Country Club, located a few miles from the PGA Golf Club.

"We did somewhat of an experiment at the country club," Taylor says. "We knew from the response that we received there — the rave reviews — that it would be a home run [at the club's courses]. The greens continue to mature and get better at the country club, and we expect the same results at the golf club."

Like many varieties, the biggest challenge in maintaining Champion is keeping it healthy in this golf course world of low-as-you-can-go cutting heights to appease the demand for faster greens, Miller says. But Champion can handle the low heights better than other varieties, he maintains.

"It's not unheard of to see Champion go significantly lower than one-eighth of an inch," he adds.

Miller remembers in the early 1990s when superintendents began "pushing the envelope" and mowing greens at one-eighth of an inch to speed up ball roll. The decision came back

Continued on page 32