

THRU THE GREEN

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The Golf Course Superintendents Association of Northern California

— Committed to Responsible Turfgrass Management —



Wente Set To Open, Host Superintendent/Pro

Ask most Northern Californian's what comes to mind when they hear the name Wente, and they'll likely respond, fine California wines. On July 15th that's about to change.

That's the day the Wente Vineyards and Wineries will christen what will soon be recognized as one of California's premier golf facilities, The Course at Wente Vineyards. NorCal Superintendents and their club professionals will join in the celebration just a week later, when Wente hosts the Superintendent/Pro Golf Tournament on July 22nd.

Demanding, scenic with a California flavor would best describe the Greg Norman creation. Winding through the hills of the Livermore Valley the site offers impressive views of Mt. Diablo as it traverses through Wente's vineyards

While your being soothed by the scenery and the ambiance of a California Winery, your patience will be put to the test. Shotmaking is a priority as you will soon learn on this arduous layout. Each hole offers a different challenge that is sure to make the golfing experience one you are not likely to forget.

For host superintendent, Jeff Shafer, being a part of The Course at Wente is an experience he is not likely to forget either. Shafer's enthusiasm for the project is evident as he describes the excitement of opening day. "I've managed four new constructions and have been a part of six others," says Shafer. "This one is by far the most gratifying and special. All of us at Wente are thrilled to be a part of this year's tournament. It's going to be a great opening week."

With the demands of course construction you would think Shafer would be looking forward to a chance to get away. Not Jeff. "I can honestly say that I love coming to work each day. This is what I love to do. Golf has been a part of my life for more than 20 years."

It all began in Michigan, as a member of the high school golf team. He launched his career in golf a short time later at Lincoln Hills Country Club, where he spent time both in the shop and on the course. "That was an invaluable experience," reflects Shafer. "The time I spent as an assistant pro has helped me have a greater understanding of golf operations." Shafer chuckles when he recalls his decision to focus his attention on course maintenance. "I thought it would be less political and of course, like most superintendents, I loved being outside."

By 1984 Shafer found himself on the west coast, establishing his career at such notable courses as Wood Ranch, Bear Creek and Hiddenbrooke. Aside from his ability to maintain quality golf courses, Jeff soon earned the reputation in the industry as a talented construction superintendent. He honed those skills during a stint in the landscape industry when he served as the landscape construction superintendent for Harold Jones Landscaping. Recognizing the need for a formal degree in today's competitive marketplace, Shafer

made the decision at age 30 to attend the Turfgrass School at Rutgers.

When the Wente Family began to fulfill their dream of building their own golf course, Shafer's experience, talents and love of the profession were just what they were looking for. "It's been a great opportunity," says Shafer. "We are extremely proud of what we have accomplished." Much of the credit Shafer insists belongs to his capable staff and his Assistant, Eric Mickleson. "I can't say enough about Eric, his expertise has been invaluable throughout the entire project."

For Shafer, life right now is like sipping a vintage glass of Merlot, with the summer sun setting on the horizon. "I have all I want, a wonderful wife and family, and a job and profession I truly love."

Media Director Makes Pitch To Board

Greg Crawford, Media Director for the Northwest Turfgrass Association and South Texas Superintendents Association made a brief presentation to the Board of Directors during the June Board Meeting. Crawford, in his address, spoke of the increased recognition superintendents in the Pacific Northwest have received as a result of numerous stories which have appeared in the local media. "Throughout our area, there has been a deepened awareness of Golf Course Superintendents, and the role they play within the golf community," said Crawford. "It didn't happen overnight. The process takes time to develop. It's a matter of being persistent and establishing contacts within the media that ultimately makes it work."

Bob Costa, who has championed the idea for the past year, thinks it's time has come. "Whether it's Greg or someone else, we need an individual who has the expertise to market our value to the industry. I think most superintendents would agree that public relations is important to us individually and to our profession, but often there just isn't sufficient time, or the appropriate contacts to make it happen. If superintendents are going to make an impact, particularly on a local level, we need someone like Greg who is trained to market and promote our position within the industry."

"Personally speaking, I believe that it's important for our Association to engage in activities that benefit each and every member. I'm convinced that in time, this is a program that can."

The support from board members appeared to strengthen as a

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