



## Superintendent - Pro Comes To Mayacama

By Host Superintendent Dale Engman

**M**ayacama Golf Club lies in the rolling hills of Sonoma County and sits amongst one of the most spectacular sites one could imagine for a golf course. The site consists of dense native chaparral, open grasslands, thick stands of varied species of oaks, madrones and manzanita and is dissected by several streams. It is here that Nicklaus Design and Forsythe Pacific developed a golf course that rivals the best in the country.

Mayacama Golf Club is an 18-hole facility and appears as if it has been here for years when in fact was only completed in February 2001. The appearance of maturity comes from the way in which Jack Nicklaus and Wadsworth Construction fit the course into the very complex site. The hills, valleys and open grasslands lend themselves perfectly to the layout of the par-72, 6,800-yard championship course. Nearly each hole is surrounded by native vegetation, creeks and trees that give the feeling of separation as one walks the course. It is this feeling of separation that is unique for courses in the area. Each hole stands on its own and gives the golfer a strong test on nearly every shot. It is a difficult course, as the 150 slope indicates, but a fair one as well. The greens are relatively small but with ample approaches and bail-out areas the golfer is presented with a variety of shot options. The golf course is a beautiful layout and challenging, but it is the setting that sets it apart from most.

Mayacama is now owned and operated by Cordillera, a premier mountain community located in Vail, Colorado. The company operates six courses in Colorado; four in the Vail valley, one in Crested Butte, one in Steamboat and Mayacama. Along with the golf, Cordillera provides world-class dining and lodging facilities for its members with several restaurants and a spectacular lodge. Construction on our clubhouse began two months ago and should be completed late summer 2003. Forty-eight lodging units, or 'casitas', will begin construction this year as well and will be ongoing for the next few years. There are 31 home sites on site and will begin constructing this year as well. So as you can see we are still under development in many ways.

The golf course is complete, open and in



great shape. We have 72 acres of irrigated turf, mostly perennial ryegrass, some fine fescue and approximately two acres of G-2 bentgrass greens. There are no large projects or renovations ongoing at this time, as we are just into our first full season of operation, however improving drainage is a continuing project and our main focus this summer. Mayacama was capped with 6 inches of sand, an essential part of our ability to maintain quality turf throughout the year. Being this far north we receive a substantial amount of rain and having the sand allows us to get out there and mow soon after rainstorms. We have eighteen crewmembers, two assistants, an equipment technician, an administrative assistant and myself.

I will have been at Mayacama for two years in July. I came from the Meadow Club as an assistant superintendent looking for that 'construction' experience, and did I get it! When I arrived the course had been rough-shaped so I was able to see all of the irrigation go in, the sand moved and every

inch of sod installed. It was more than I was prepared for but the experience is one that I wouldn't trade for anything. I moved from assistant to superintendent just a month prior to grand opening. I can't say I can remember a more stressful time in my life. I knew I was ready but the timing of it all was very difficult and in general the transition from assistant to superintendent is one of the hardest moves to be made in this industry. But I made it and now with my feet firmly under me I am thoroughly enjoying the experience of being a superintendent. Don't get me wrong it hasn't been easy. The long hours my staff and I put in have taken a toll but things are settling down a bit and I feel our crew is solid, continually learning but solid. My two assistants, Colin Fenby and Andy Nelson are doing a fantastic job being my

eyes and ears on the golf course. It feels good to finally have a staff that I can trust will get done what needs to be done.

The horticulture classes that I took at Santa Rosa Junior College while I was working in landscaping sparked my interest in agriculture and with a little research I learned that Cal Poly San Luis Obispo had a turf program. That was all I needed! With my goal firmly set I ventured off to central California to attend, in my mind, the best university around. Yeah, there are other more prestigious universities but Cal Poly SLO had many things that appealed to me. It is in a fun college town, has great mountains for bike riding, a bit of isolation and beautiful beaches; with the latter being the strongest influence on my decision. My passion for the ocean and surfing is still strong, however as of late this thing called work seems to get in the way far too often. But for me it is a sacrifice worth making.

Before making the move to Mayacama I See "Mayacama" on page 5





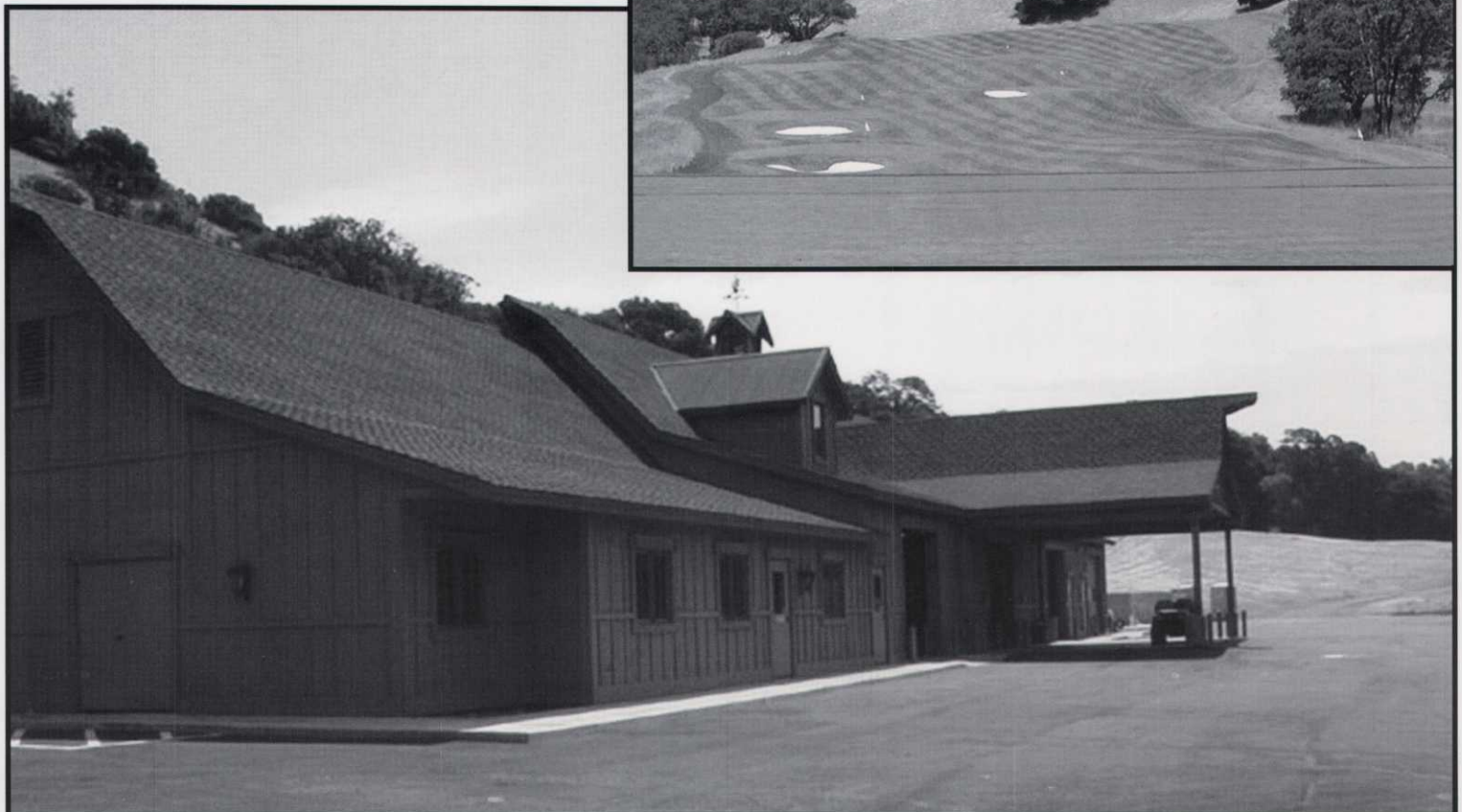
## Mayacama (Continued)

worked as assistant superintendent to Dave Sexton at the Meadow Club for three years. In that time I learned an immense amount of knowledge of how golf operations run, especially irrigation and drainage. The two are fundamental for a solid golf course and I feel fortunate to have learned from one of the best. Once at Mayacama my knowledge of construction began increasing from day one. Working under Marc Logan, it was really interesting seeing the entire construction process and how it went together. His construction practices and ideas on fertility will stay with me for years to come.

My two years at Mayacama have been lengthy ones. I would have never thought I could have done it a few years ago but as the project grows I have become more and more excited to be here. Being involved in such a quality operation is fun and I am dedicated to working to make it as good as it can be. I continue to learn on a daily basis and hope to further my knowledge through seminars, classes, experiences and people. As Cordillera continues to look for other projects to be involved with I find myself wondering where my career path will take me. But for now and the foreseeable future I am stoked to call this beautiful place called Mayacama home. /



Above: The tightly guarded third at Mayacama, Below: The practice range



Mayacama's new maintenance facility