

The highest standards

"In the resort industry, you have to do a lot of volume to turn a profit," says Smyly, who has been with the company for 14 years. "Particularly here on Hilton Head Island, you have to have a very high standard for the final product—from your landscape management to fine china."

Despite his respect for the current management, Smyly remains in awe of Fraser, the man who at age 21 had a vision of Sea Pines as a thriving resort.

Pointing to perhaps the most recognized part of the island, the large oak tree called "Liberty Oak," with Harbour Town's candy-striped lighthouse in its background, Smyly explains that it took an extra \$60,000 from Fraser to save the tree when the harbor was developed.

"Charles Fraser had a photographic, projective mind," Smyly says. "The way the buildings are set in conjunction with the landscape...there's no negotiation there between man and nature. It all just comes together."

And it's Smyly's job to keep it together. During the resort season, which runs from March 1 to Sept. 1, Smyly and his summer staff of 48 (it dwindles to about 25 in the winter) are responsible for more than 300 acres: villa properties, clubhouses, the Hilton Head Inn, restaurants, and Harbour Town village.

Villa management produces revenue which supplements the regular budget. But Smyly calls it a thankless job. "There are 5,000 property owners who all have their own green thumbs and their own direction to follow," he says.

The four golf courses in Sea Pines are maintained by others although Smyly occasionally helps out a superintendent. (One time, his crew had seven days to plant 1,000 azaleas on a course before a big tournament.)

Varieties of turf

Although Charles Fraser is the vision behind the resort, landscape architect Robert Marvin designed many of the areas. The Greenery, a local landscape contractor, did most of the original installations.

Turf on the island consists of the three major warm-season varieties: hybrid bermudagrass, centipede, and St. Augustine. "Centipede is a hardy grass," explains Smyly. "The golf courses use bermuda for its aesthetic

value, and St. Augustine grows well under the shade of the large oak trees."

Besides oaks and live oaks, characterized by willowy branches drooping over roads, the island's most abundant trees are palms. Ornamental pampas grass adds a tropical look to many of the villas. It also helps naturally control erosion.

Some native plant materials haven't survived the recent harsh

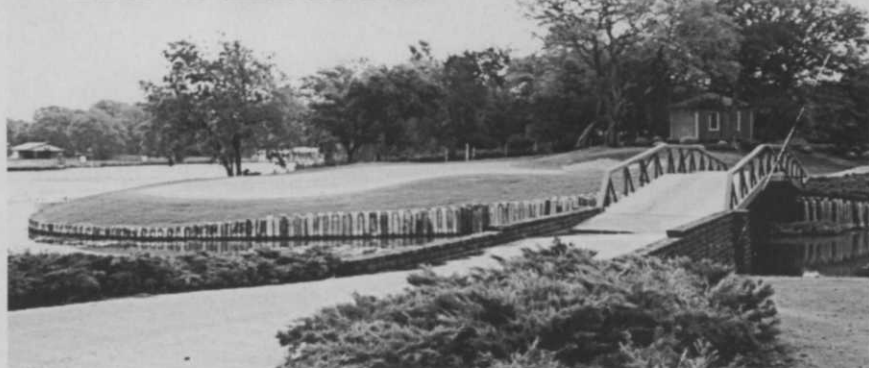
winters. "We've had to redirect our thinking to late-blooming materials," says Smyly.

Unusual weather still doesn't weigh as heavily on Smyly's mind as does the threat of a hurricane. Hurricane David in 1979 forced evacuation of the island. "It's like Russian roulette," he says.

"Eventually it's going to happen."

—Heide Aungst

A COOL BREEZE IN TEXAS



One of the reasons for the popularity of Horseshoe Bay is the ample water supply, a pleasant change from other Southwestern resorts. The 16th hole at Applerock, one of three courses at the resort, provides a picturesque setting.

Draw a mental image of south central Texas. Include cacti, tumble weed, dust, and pancake-flat prairie stretching as far as the eye can see.

But some Texans just north of Austin have a secret oasis—a place that looks more like Eden than Tombstone Gulch. Tucked into 50 miles of rolling, fertile green hills is a series of sparkling channel lakes, beginning with Lake Austin and ending with Lyndon B. Johnson Lake in Marble Falls. Alongside "Lake LBJ," the striking beauty of this unexpected hill country reaches its pinnacle at Horseshoe Bay Country Club (HBCC) Resort, where you can follow roads like "Bay West," and "Smuggler's Cove."

"The hills and the lakes definitely set us apart from most Southwestern resorts," says Alan Houdek, the HBCC director of golf course and amenity grounds maintenance. "But we have some other things we're proud of here that keep people coming back year after year."

When HBCC opened in 1971 on

what was previously the Coca-Cola Ranch, it was primarily a yacht club, marina, and riding stables. Today, additions include 14 tennis courts (four under a dome) and 54 golf holes. The 4,600-acre resort is the largest Robert Trent Jones-designed complex in the continental United States.

And golf is the drawing card. "Our primary clientele are the retirees who own homes here," Houdek says. "They live here because of the golf."

Another factor is the resort's aesthetic appeal—the kind of appeal that involves hard work and expert care. Owner Norman Hurd favors Oriental influences in the landscape: statues, fountains, and sculptured ornamentals.

Torrid Texas winters

This year is Houdek's 13th at HBCC. He's experienced some challenges the past few years.

Two years—1984 and 1985—were entirely out of character for south central Texas' climate. Both years,

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THE LEADER IN INNOVATION

LANDSCAPE PROFILE *continued*



Alan Houdek maintains his Penncross bentgrass greens at $\frac{5}{32}$ -inch.

brutal winter temperatures caused damaging freezes. "In '84, we had about two weeks of sub-20's temperatures," Houdek remembers. "The next winter wasn't quite as bad, but between the two, we lost all of our 50-foot palm trees."

Each of the three courses has at least 10 holes with water hazards. The tees are Tifdwarf bermuda, the

that draw people to Horseshoe Bay. Houdek says that he has applied 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ pounds of Bayleton per acre every three weeks during the warm season for the past three years, and it has kept dollar spot from being "much of an issue."

A fast fungicide

The primary disease, Houdek says, is brown patch. "It's just a predictable, consistent disease in this part of the country from May through October," he says. "There are a number of chemicals with comparable prices that can control it, but Dyrene fungicide is the fastest I've tried."

He alternates the Dyrene with Scotts Fluid Fungicide, which also gives him satisfactory results.

Houdek is thankful for the independence his job at Horseshoe Bay gives him. "We're privately owned, and I prefer it that way," he says. "We care about the members' opinions, but we still get the pride of knowing it's our course done our way."

"I run a pretty tight ship, and I know the owner is happy with what his money is getting him."

Houdek predicts almost 100,000 rounds next year. Within 10 years, he predicts the resort to be within Austin's rapidly expanding boundaries. That means the number of retirement and second homes around Horseshoe Bay will multiply rapidly.

"And then," he says, "the secret will be out." **WT&T**

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—Alan Houdek
Horseshoe Bay C.C.

fairways Tifway bermuda, and the greens Penncross bentgrass maintained at $\frac{5}{32}$ of an inch.

"We were one of the first to use Penncross in this part of the country," Houdek says. "For quite some time, we were the most southerly course in the nation using it."

Houdek controls a light grub problem by applying Oftanol insecticide once a year.

The more difficult problems are turf diseases associated with the same weather conditions—moist lake air and balmy temperatures—