Successful contractors reveal the trucks that work for them, and their dream trucks, too

BY VICKY POULSEN

"

ld reliable" is the name landscape professionals prefer to give their most beloved truck. Almost every company has an "old reliable." It's the truck that never breaks

down and always performs satisfactorily. Landscape professionals stick to proven brands that have given them years of excellent service and reliability. They've built partnerships with local truck dealers who can give them the greatest return on their investment, and they've employed excellent mechanics to keep their company vehicles in high gear. Three contractors have this to say about their trucks:

Dora Landscaping Company



Name: Jim Oyler Title: President Location: Apopka, FL 2001 gross revenue: \$10 million Business mix: Mostly commercial Employees: "We currently employ 88 employees, but this will fluctuate to approximately 125 in our peak summer season. The majority of our crews are four-man crews, but we have crews varying from three to eight people depending on the size and scope of our projects." Company profile: Dora Landscaping Company began in 1976 in Orlando, FL. "Each year we've prudently expanded, striving for excellence and providing only the highest quality service and workmanship at a reasonable cost. We operate four full-service divisions: landscape construction, irrigation, grounds maintenance and Southern Landscape Growers, our wholesale nursery. Landscape construction is our largest division. Highly qualified and trained superintendents manage each project. Our grounds maintenance division provides comprehensive grounds management services. Basic grounds management, integrated pest management (IPM), fertilization, arbor care and floriculture are all services we capably provide. The irrigation division provides build-to-suit and design/build irrigation systems to meet any customer's needs. Our wholesale nursery



trucks to fit bigger crews.

occupies a large portion of our 30-acre facility in Orlando. In addition to retail operations, we provide premium materials on retrofit grounds maintenance projects." Trucks: Their fleet includes several Ford Fseries trucks (150/250) as well as Ford 150 vans, F600 dump trucks, XL-Club wagons, extended-cab pickups, Rangers and Explorers. The company also has Chevy models, which include extended-cab pickups, C1500 extended cabs, Tahoes and Step Vans. Their fleet also includes a Jeep Grand Wagon, Freightliner with 16-ft. flat dump body, Isuzu NPR spray rig, three Nissan Xes, a Nissan pickup truck and an International S1900 dump truck.

Favorite features: Alan Swinburne, mainte-

Jim Oyler

Trucks with dump beds are a necessity for Anderson's design/build services.

nance operations manager, says his favorite is Ford's Super Duty truck because it's bulletproof, unstoppable and requires low maintenance. A must-have item in Florida is air conditioning. "It's the only creature comfort we have in these trucks," Swinburne says. Finance method: The company currently leases 16 vehicles, and 19 vehicles have been purchased. Swinburne says Ford's Trac lease program is a popular option. "We shop around but have a good relationship with the Ford dealer next to us who gives us a good price and excellent service." Dream truck: "F-550 crew cab with a flatbed dump on the back...a Super Duty truck that will do anything big or small."

DeSantis Landscapes



Tom DeSantis

Name: Tom DeSantis Title: Operations manager Location: Salem, OR 2001 gross revenue: \$2 million Business mix: Primarily residential Employees: 43 in peak season

Company profile: "Founded in 1974 in the Willamette Valley, we built our company with the excellent relationships we formed with our customers, our quality work, our technical expertise, great service and our community involvement. We are a full-service landscape operation from design to sales, with 55% of our business devoted to installation. 30% to maintenance and 12% to irrigation." The company has won regional and state





awards, including a "best in all" award for its work at the Children's Garden. It also won a 2001 National Torch Award for Marketplace Ethics and a 2000 regional Business Integrity Award, both presented by the Better Business Bureau. The company was also named one of the best 100 companies to work for by Oregon Business Magazine in 2001.

Trucks: "We have four Isuzu 1 1/2-ton trucks (three diesel-powered, one gas), one Chevrolet one-ton with a dump bed, a Chevy oneton with a four-door large cab, eight Chevy 3/4-ton pickups, one Chevy half-ton and two Toyota half-tons that we use for sales. We have a Chevy one-ton van for our irrigation specialist. We also have maintenance steel trailers, which have been custom designed and built to include an enclosed six-foot-deep box where we keep all our small tools and equipment. In back, the trailers have a springassisted open deck which opens easily." Best features: "Most of our 3/4-ton pickups have an E-Z dump bed for loading and emptying, which has prevented a lot of back injuries. One of our Isuzu trucks has a dump with a three-foot stationary box with tools and doors on either side. The dump bed is something we couldn't live without. We also have a fleet mechanic on duty all the time, and every morning he does safety and maintenance checks on all of the vehicles." Finance methods: "We buy our trucks. Generally, our trucks run on a 10-year cycle before we buy a new one. It also depends on how well the business is doing. We shop around, but we have a good relationship with a dealer who takes good care of us and has an excellent service department." Dream truck: "The trucks we have are already great."

Anderson Landscape **Construction**, Inc.



Name: Fred Anderson Title: President Location: Lancaster, MA Business mix: Mostly residential **Employees**: 10 2001 gross revenue:

Fred Anderson \$1.3 million Company profile: Anderson Landscape Construction is beginning its 20th year as a landscape construction company for high-end residential homes in the greater Boston area. The company generally runs three crews. Trucks: Their truck fleet includes one 1996 Ford F350, two 1999 Ford F550s, one 1997 Ford Ranger pickup and one 1998 Ford Ranger pickup. This year they expect to buy a four-door Isuzu rackbody truck. Best features: "They're diesels. The F350 can pull trailers and equipment. The F550s are great for plowing parking lots, and their 8x8 body allows for four pallets of material. The Rangers are great for gas mileage and long commutes, and the Isuzu will be perfect for crew transportation." When deciding to buy a truck, Anderson said serviceability of a particular make is an important consideration. "Fast turnaround for repairs is vital for our business to continue running smoothly. Price is usually not the prime motivator ... it has to do with what options are offered and how they fit into our needs for landscape construction."

Finance method: "We like to buy new."

Dream truck: GMC Avalanche.

leels

6500, 7500, 8500 trucks, GVWR ranges from 19,501 to 61,000 lbs. Packages available to cover snowplow

requirements

- Greater maneuverability and visibility
 - Advanced chassis and braking system
 - Improved ride and handling

2003 Chevrolet Silverado and 2003 GMC Sierra 1500

HD (available in either 2WD or 4WD crew cab short box models)

Best features:

► Variety of engine configurations available including the Vortec 6000 SFI

V-8 engine which can be mated to the Allison 1000 Series five-speed automatic transmission

Expanded availability of Quadrasteer four-wheel steering system on the Silverado and Sierra 1500 HD 2WD and 4WD short box pickups

Extended cab model with the standard fourth door available in Base, LS and LT models

Silverado Chassis Cab, available in regular, four-door, extended cab, crew cab, and LS and LT models

Dodge

2003 heavy duty Ram (2500/3500) Best features:

Delivers a segment-leading payload rating of 12,000 lbs. GVWR

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Features that turn your truck into a lean, mean working machine

BY VICKY POULSEN

▲ Dodge Ram 4x4s feature a quicker steering ratio perfect for maneuvering trailers in tight areas.



rum roll please as we present to you, our readers, the finest that truck manufacturers have to offer in their lineups for 2002 and 2003. You'll notice several new

model additions, as well as some of your old favorites with new features.

Chevrolet-GMC

2003 Chevrolet Kodiak/GMC TopKick medium duty trucks (Class 4 through 8) Best features:

GVWRs range from 16,000 lbs. for the C4500 and 19,000 lbs. for the C5500. For

► The Ford F-150 SuperCab's V-6 engine produces 202 hp and 252 lb.-ft. of torque.

continued from page 58

 2WD trucks feature a new rack and pinion-type steering system
4WD Dodge Ram heavy duty trucks feature a quicker steering ratio which is effective when turning sharp corners or maneuvering a trailer in tight quarters
Available in two new transfer cases — 2500 and 3500 four-wheel drive models, a conventional manual shift and new electric shift

2002 Dakota quad-cab/four-door Best features:

 Optional six-passenger seating capacity
The 5'3" bed is the largest among fourdoor pickups and can handle up to 1,770
lbs. of payload. Quad Cab can tow up to 6,200 lbs.

Four powerful Magnum engines designed to meet the varying needs of the compact buyer

A 6,650-lb. maximum towing capacity and 2,160-lb. maximum payload capability

Ford

2002 F-150 series (Two-door regular cab, four-door SuperCab, four-door SuperCrew available in XLT and Lariat packaging) **Best features**:

Power adjustable accelerator and brake pedals, standard on the F-150 SuperCrew and all Lariat models, and optional on XL and XLT trucks

 Tie-down hooks are located in each corner of all F-150 cargo boxes to help secure cargo
The rear step bumper provides easier access to the cargo area

▶ F-150 standard regular cab and Super-Cab 4.2-liter OHV V-6 engine produces 202 hp and 252 lb.-ft of torque

▶ The 4.6-liter SOHC Triton V-8, which is standard with F-150 SuperCrew and optional with regular cab and SuperCab models, delivers 231 hp and 293 lb.-ft. of torque



2002 F-250/F-350 series (Super duty) Best features:

 Upgrade from standard five- to six-speed manual

Improved performance and shift feel on

6.8-liter gas engine equipped models

Six-way power passenger seat standard on Lariat crew cab models

 Improved lumbar support system, providing a greater range of adjustment

Automatic transmission

- Available in a variety of engines including
- a 7.3-liter Power Stroke turbo diesel V-8

Hino

FB medium duty truck (Class 5) Best features:

 An 11,000-lb. body and payload capacity
It can be spec'd as a flatbed, with stake beds or with a small dump body

 Powered by a turbo intercooled fourvalve overhead cam engine and driven through a five-speed direct drive transmission, or optional four-speed automatic
Its cab-over design makes driving in tight

residential areas easy

Cab features an enlarged interior with room for three people

Six-way adjustable air-ride driver's seat with improved support on a chassis that's supported by long, taper-leaf springs

Isuzu

2002 NQR

Best features: A GVWR of 17,950 lbs. and a body/payload range from 11,733 to 11,965 lbs.

Body lengths range from 12 to 20 ft. with a choice of four different wheelbase lengths

A straight channel ladder type frame with a section modulus of 7.2 cu. in. and a Resistance Bending Moment (RBM) of 316,800 lbs. for those demanding heavier body applications

Equipped with front and rear semielliptical, multi-leaf springs and shock absorbers. A front stabilizer bar contributes to greater handling and steering capabilities

Equipped with ABS

 4.75-liter, 4HE1-TC, four-cylinder diesel engine

It incorporates an overhead cam engine design and direct fuel injection. This 4HE1-TC is rated at 175 gross hp at 2,700 rpm and 347 ft.-lbs. gross torque at 2,000 rpm
NQR offers a choice of transmissions

2002 low cab-forward crew cab

(NPR-HD and NQR) Best features:

Seats a crew of seven people comfortably — three across in front and four abreast in back

► Available in two wheelbase configurations — a 150-in. wheelbase accommodates 12-ft. bodies, and a 176-in. wheelbase handles 16-ft. bodies

The crew cab's diesel engine, coupled with a four-speed overdrive automatic transmission, delivers 175 hp at 2,700 rpm

Mitsubishi Fuso's 2002 FE-SP with crew cab hauls seven people plus a payload to a job.

Visibility is enhanced with an oversized panoramic-view front windshield
The NPR-HD crew cab is rated at 14,500 lbs. GVWR, while the NQR is rated at 17,950 lbs.
NPR-HD crew cab features 4,500 lb. GVWR; 150- and 176-in. wheel bases; ac-

commodates 12-ft. bodies NQR crew cab features 17,950 lbs. GVWR; 150- and 176-in. wheel base; accommodates 16-ft. bodies

2002 F-Series

commercial trucks (Class 6-7) Best features:

Class 6 FSR, Class 6-7 FTR and Class



7 FVR are powered by an Isuzu 6HK1-TC diesel engine in two horsepower configurations

The 7.8-liter overhead cam engine is turbocharged, intercooled and equipped with electronic fuel injection

▶ Installed in the FSR and FTR, the six-



cylinder diesel develops 200 hp at 2,400 rpm and 441 ft.-lbs. gross torque at 1,500 rpm. The version used in the higher payload FVR diesel engine develops 230 hp at 2,400 rpm and 506 ft.-lbs. gross torque at 1,500 rpm All F-Series models include as standard an Isuzu MLD6Q and six-speed manual overdrive transmission synchronized in gears two through six. The transmission has a standard PTO opening. Available as an option in the FSR and FTR is an Allison AT545, four-speed automatic transmission

Mitsubishi Fuso

2002 FE-SP with crew cab Best features:

Hauls seven people (plus a payload) to a job with its 175-hp turbocharged, fuel-injected diesel engine with four-speed automatic transmission

Can handle any application with 14,500 lbs. GVWR and also features a 165.4-in. wheelbase to handle a range of body styles (including landscaping and dump bodies from 13 to 14 ft., lawn service bodies up to 16 ft., stake bodies and medium-sized car carrier platforms)

All gauges and controls are easy to read and reach

Toyota

2002 Tundra Best features:

Available in a variety of configurations including 2WD or 4WD, two-door regular cab with an eight-ft. bed or four-door access cab with a 6'3" bed. Both V-8 and V-6 engines available with four-speed automatic transmission

 V-8 models can be equipped with a new limited slip differential for added traction
Standard version offers a 3.4-liter, double-overhead cam, 24-valve V-6 engine that generates 190 hp and 220 lbs.-ft. of torque

▶ V-8 models deliver low-end torque, strong top-end acceleration, more than 2,000 lbs. of payload with the available style package, and up to 7,200 lbs. of towing capacity

▶ The Access Cab's 40/60 rear split-bench seat provides seating for three passengers

2002 Tacoma (compact) Best features:

Available in regular cab, Xtracab and double cab models in 4x2, PreRunner and 4x4 configurations, with four-cylinder or V-6 engines, and with a manual or automatic transmission

StepSide bed is offered on regular and Xtracab models

All 2WD Tacomas (excluding S-Runner and PreRunner) feature a standard 2.4-liter, 16-valve, twin-cam four-cylinder engine that produces 142 hp at 5,000 rpm and 160 lb./ft. of torque at 4,000 rpm
Four-wheel-drive and PreRunner models feature a four-cylinder engine in the compact pickup segment with a standard 2.7-liter, 16-valve twin-cab producing 150 hp at 4,800 rpm and 177 lb./ft. of torque at 4,000 rpm

► The cargo bed features a double-wall design and, when properly equipped, is capable of towing up to 5,000 lbs. with the V-6 engine and 3,500 lbs. when powered by a four-cylinder with a payload range of 1,375 to 2,005 lbs.

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On-demand four-wheel drive makes Polaris's Professional Series utility task vehicles more versatile.

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have a five-speed, fully syn-

chronized transmission that

lets you keep going without

Hydrostatic steering provides for preci-

With a 2,650-lb. payload capacity and

heavy loads. Extra strength comes in the

form of a one-piece axle supporting the

rear wheels, allowing for more capacity

Designed especially for golf course use

Features quiet operation, a larger cargo

Has a maximum speed of 18 mph and is

Low ground pressure and low center of

equipped with a 44x49x9-in. cargo bed

with a 500-lb. payload capacity

gravity prevent ruts and turf marks

Professional Series 2x4, 4x4 and 6x6

Powerful four-valve, four-stroke, liquid-

cooled Polaris 500 (4x4 and 6x6 engine) or

sion controls and a tight turning radius

hydraulic lift, the ProGator can handle

stopping to change gears

and stability

Turf Gator

Polaris

Best features:

Best features:

bed and faster speeds

utility task vehicles

Cub Cadet

Big Country utility vehicle Best features:

 Powered by a 20-hp Honda V-Twin OHV engine for extra hauling power
Six-wheel fully-independent suspension system provides maximum traction, improved maneuverability and comfort over rough terrain

▶ 1,400-lb. payload capacity combined with a 13.3 cu. ft. bed capacity

Standard four-wheel drive

Fully welded steel frame — no-bolt construction

7254 compact tractor

Best features:

 25-hp Kawasaki gasoline fully-enclosed engine and underhood muffler for a quieter ride
SensiTrak on-demand four-wheel drive hydrostatic transmission is automatically directed when and where you need it most

- Cast-iron transmission
- Fully welded steel frame
- Hydrostatic power steering
- Rollover protection

John Deere

ProGator

70

Best features:

Available in 23.5-hp diesel and 26-hp



Polaris 425 (2x4 engine)

On-demand four-wheel drive with dashmounted on/off switch

OLARIS

Long-travel dual-shock rear suspension

Rustproof cargo box with molded plastic liner holds up to half a ton of cargo

High towing capacity (1,500 lbs. for 6x6 and 4x4, 1,400 lbs. for 2x4)

Electric dump box lift

Available accessories include: full windshield, winch kit, turf tires, mud and EMT Run Flat tires, plowblade, roof, side and cargo box covers

E-Z-GO Textron

WorkHorse ST 480 Best features:

An 800-lb. payload capacity and a 48-in. load bed

▶16-hp, four-cycle 480cc twin cylinder Vanguard V-twin engine — largest in the WorkHorse ST line and capable of reaching a maximum speed of 17 mph. Also features a locking rear differential for added versatility

The ST 480 provides a heavy duty multiple leaf spring suspension with hydraulic shock absorbers and self-compensating single reduction rack and pinion steering for a comfortable ride

▶ Fits in the bed of a full-sized pickup truck

Additional features include a welded high-strength tubular steel chassis, a flexible impact-resistant front cowl, a Magnetron Ignition with self-contained transistor module, individual bucket seats, dual rear-wheel self-adjusting hydraulic brakes with a handcontinued on page 72

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT / APRIL 2002 / www.landscapemanagement.net

Reading Body's contractor body and equipment carrier in one



continued from page 70

operated parking brake, power dump bed with removable sides and tailgate, six-gal. tank with fuel gauge, reverse warning indicator and halogen headlights

Omaha Standard

Omaha Standard Landscaper Body Best features:

Bodies available in lengths of 12'6," 14'6" and 16'6" with an outside body width of 96 in.

Inside usable area is 90-in.-wide by 12, 14 or 16 ft. long, allowing loading of pallets side-by-side

Side heights are available in 40 and 52 in. and are made of 10-gauge smooth steel with an optional front-mounted 48-in. side access door on the curbside or street side, making access to the front of the body easy
The bulkhead is also made of 10-gauge steel



Omaha Standard's
Landscaper Truck Body



A 36-in. cab shield or 12-in. weld-on tool tray with perforated base is available as an option

The unitized rear doors are made of 10-gauge steel with top-punched skin sheets. The top full opening rear doors swing around and lock to the sides for loading. The double acting dump gate is hinged at the top for dumping/spreading, and the bottom is hinged for extension of the platform load area or dropping down for dock loading

Platforms are available with wood, smooth steel or tread plate

Reading Body

Platform toolbox combination Best features:

A contractor body and equipment carrier in one. Tools and equipment are carried in lockable toolbox compartments. Bin dividers with a shelf are an option

The open cargo area transports any loose or solid cargo on deckplate steel or wood floor

 Platforms are top coated with a twocomponent, high gloss black urethane paint. Reading platforms, like all Reading products, receive Lectro-Life immersion priming for rust and corrosion protection
Backed by a three-year limited warranty

Super Lawn Truck

Equipment storage and transportation system Best features:

Equipped with a hydraulically-operated ramp that allows large commercial mowers



to drive right into the back of the truck for easy transport

The large box-type van is equipped with the hand and power tool storage system that neatly stores over 50 common lawn maintenance tools

The on-board fuel station reduces fuel stops to one per week

SCI Products

Workman slide-out container for pickup trucks

Best features:

 Will slide off or on your truck fullyloaded

Can be used as a job container or dump box

It allows the operator to drive or load equipment or materials in it while it's on the ground. Materials slide on or off a truck in less than a minute LM

Mobile and agile

Talk a lot

Kenwood Communications' ProTalk XLS palmsized two-way radio with four-mile range transmits ultra high frequency (UHF) radio signals. Equipped with a built-in VOX capability

> and vibration alert, ProTalk is userprogrammable to provide two channels of voice communication from a choice of 242 channel combinations. Its features will accommodate personal user preferences while organizing group communications. It fea-

tures voice encryption, channel scanning, and a backlit LCD display with numeric and icon read-outs indicating programmed settings and radio performance. For more information contact Kenwood Communications at 800/950-5005 or www.kenwood.net / circle no. 285

Keeping watch

FleetBoss Global Positioning Solutions' The Boss fleet management systems uses global positioning satellite (GPS) technology. FleetBoss AutoGraphics software analyzes and reports the data in easy-to-read graphic formats. The systems provide vehicle data such as start and stop times, number of stops by address per day, mileage, maximum speed, idle times, routes traveled and more. The systems can also be customized to monitor service equipment usage. The Boss systems use a small antenna on each vehicle that links it to the GPS system. The vehicle data is then easily downloaded into the user's master database, providing a permanent history of the entire fleet operation. For more information contact FleetBoss Global Positioning Solutions at 877/265-0365 or www.fleetboss.com / circle no. 286

Crunch numbers

Service Communication Software's Service Pro 2000 helps landscapers route, schedule, job cost, market, bill and collect. It creates more than 400 built-in reports, and allows users to make solid operating choices and project sales, growth and income. Mobile accessories include the Handheld and the Pocket Pro. Search for accounts using a customer's name, account number, or phone number; use multi-route view to edit a daily or weekly schedule for multiple routes. The "Best Fit" feature determines the most efficient date and time to schedule a new service, or retreat and scan bar codes to prove your identity and work completed. For more information contact Service Communication Software at 614/873-6706 or www.pickscs.com / circle no. 287

Go digital

Nextel Communications uses iDEN (integrated Digital Enhanced Network) technology developed by Motorola. It's a digital wireless system that combines digital cellular, Nextel Direct Connect, text/numeric messaging and wireless web services in a single phone. Popular for the construction trades where out-of-office communication is necessary. Data-capable phones

allow Nextel customers to

access the Web. The company recently introduced the first Java-powered phone in North America. It offers numerous applications specifically for the business customer, including construction calculators, expense pads, voice activation, speakerphone, etc. For more information contact Nextel Communications at 800/639-8359 or visit www.nextel.com / circle no. 288

Well-received

Vertex Standard's VX-1210 HF band transceiver is weather-resistant, lightweight and userfriendly. Field programming of up to 500 channels allows for continuous receiver coverage between .5 and 30 MHz and transceiver coverage between 1.6 and 30 MHz. The unit offers up to 20 watts of transmit output power. The VX-1210 features a backlit LCD display and alphanumeric labeling of memory channels. Selcall and Telcall are standard features, including a "kill system" to disable unauthorized use. **For more information e-mail Vertex Standard at sales@vxstdusa.com or visit <u>www.vxstd.com</u> / circle no. 289**

Palm it

Palm, Inc.'s Palm i705 handheld delivers always-on "push" e-mail from up to eight e-mail accounts; secure, end-to-end, behind-the-firewall e-mail for corporate users; web browsing via Google search or URL entry. The classic Palm Personal Information Management (PIM) features a date and address book in a one-piece package. AOL's Instant Messenger service and other AOL services are also on

the Palm i705 wireless handheld.

For more information contact Palm, Inc. at 408/878-9000 or <u>www.palm.com</u> / circle no. 290