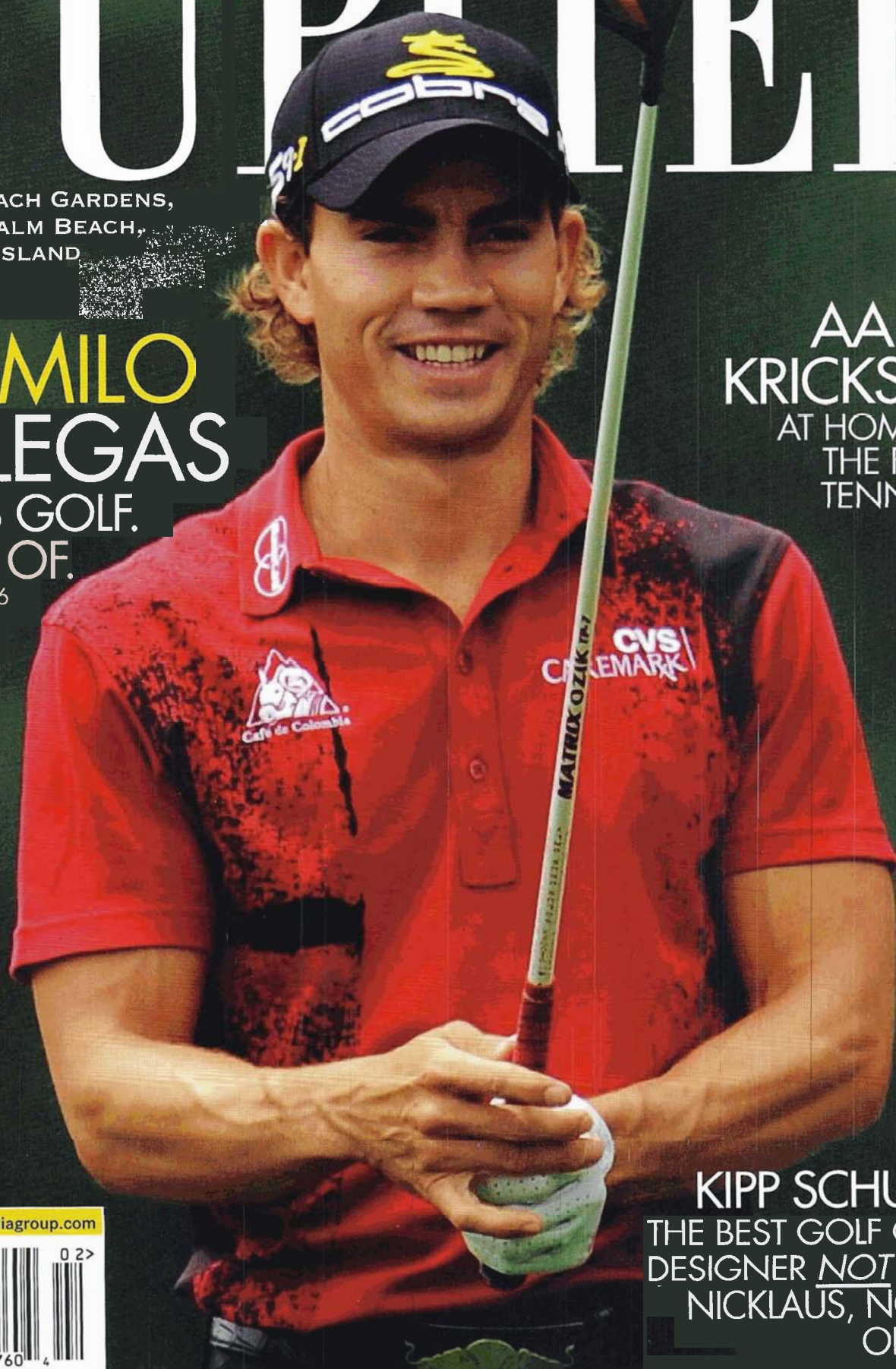


JUPITER

PALM BEACH GARDENS,
NORTH PALM BEACH,
JUPITER ISLAND

CAMILO
VILLEGAS
TALKS GOLF.
SORT OF.
ON PAGE 66

AARON
KRICKSTEIN
AT HOME WITH
THE FORMER
TENNIS STAR



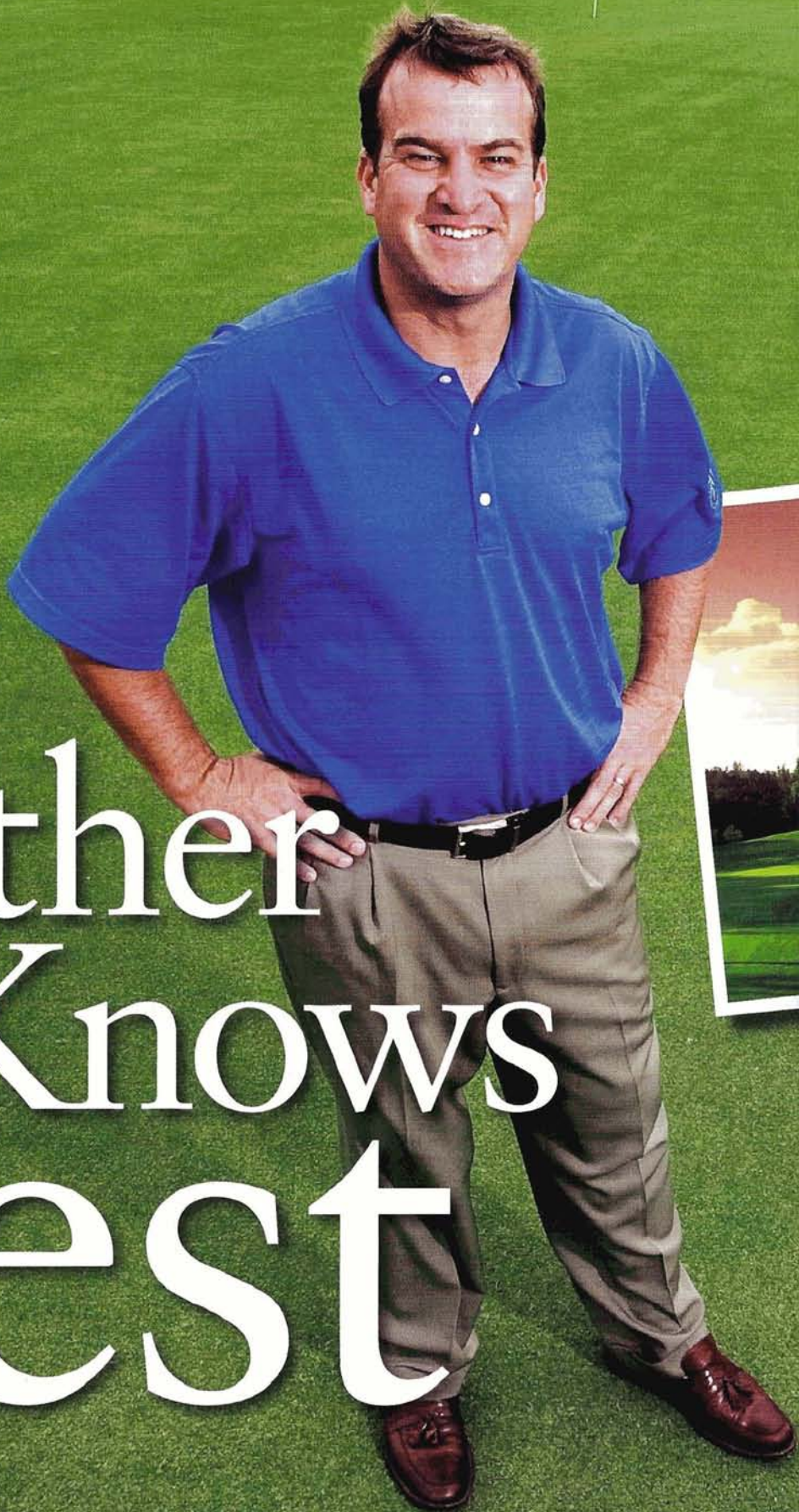
KIPP SCHULTIES:
THE BEST GOLF COURSE
DESIGNER NOT NAMED
NICKLAUS, NORMAN
OR PLAYER

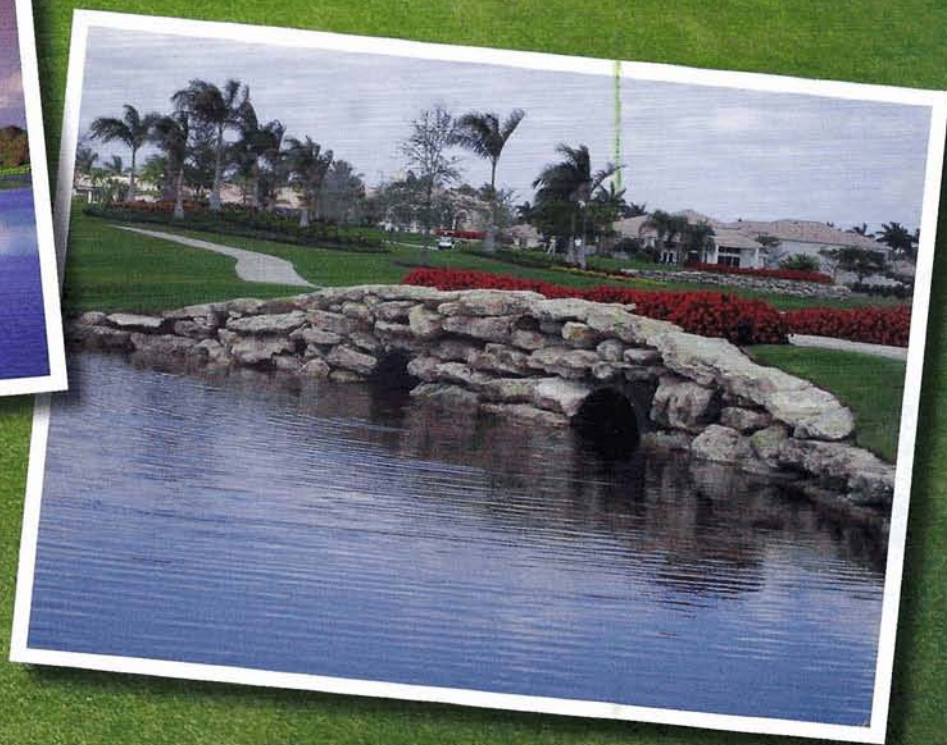
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GOLF DESIGN

Mother Knows Best





Golf course designer *Kipp Schulties*
heeded maternal advice.

By Bernard McCormick | Photography by Jason Nuttle



THERE ARE TWO WAYS to become a successful golf course designer. One is to be a world-class golfer such as Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer or Gary Player. The other is to listen to your mother.

Kipp Schulties did the latter. He had been a good high school golfer in Indiana, and won a half scholarship to the University of Evansville, better known for basketball than golf.

"I didn't last a semester," Schulties recalls. "I couldn't play 18 holes of golf and keep up with my class work. My

scores were bad, my grades were bad. I dropped out and transferred to Purdue."

He did not touch a club for 3.5 years as a Boilermaker, but he did study and graduated with a degree in civil engineering. Then came decision time.

"I didn't know what to do with my degree," he says. "I thought maybe I'd build airports or something. Then my mother said, 'You always liked golf. Why not design golf courses?'"

Schulties thought that was a long-shot suggestion, but when visiting Florida during spring break he looked up



Kipp Schulties pictured with Chris Kelly, a design associate, at Schulties' office in Jupiter.

golf course designers in the phone book.

"I'll be darned if there weren't 12 companies in Palm Beach County alone. Keep in mind, I had never heard of Robert Trent Jones Sr. I had never heard of Pete Dye. But I called up Jack Nicklaus' office and they referred me to Gene Bates, and there Tom Walker was kind enough to spend two and a half hours talking to me. He told me just to go out and do everything. I went to work at PGA National as an intern."

It was 1991. By 1993, Schulties had full-time work with Gene Bates, which soon became Couples Bates, and within a year he was wearing the title of designer.

"There's really no formal training for this business," he says. "Only a few schools even have courses in golf course management. You really just go out and learn on the job, the way it used to be for everything. Here I was 24, 25 years old, handling three or four jobs."

Clients were beginning to notice that although they were dealing with a well-known firm, most of the work was actually being done by this young fellow.

Sensing a career, he also managed to earn an M.B.A. in finance from the University of Miami. Noting that one of his jobs came in at \$800,000, and he was making \$30,000 a year, Schulties decided to go out on his own. He arranged in 1997 to become an independent contractor, while still working for Bates. That arrangement lasted 18 months.

By 1998, Schulties was making a name for himself, but was tempted when a friend suggested with a degree in finance, he might enjoy time on Wall Street. He moved to New York and enjoyed the next 18 months immensely, working for B.A. Capital Company as an associate. However, he continued his golf business.

"I did golf courses in the morning and I read financial stuff in the afternoon. It was a great place to be. But I found I had so much work in Florida, I was doing the Boca Resort and Don Shula's resort. I needed to come back down here."

Ten years later, and just having turned 40, Schulties is the busiest golf course designer in South Florida, although anything but the best known. That's because none of the glamorous links bear his signature. Not yet, anyway. That may change, however, when the economy revives.

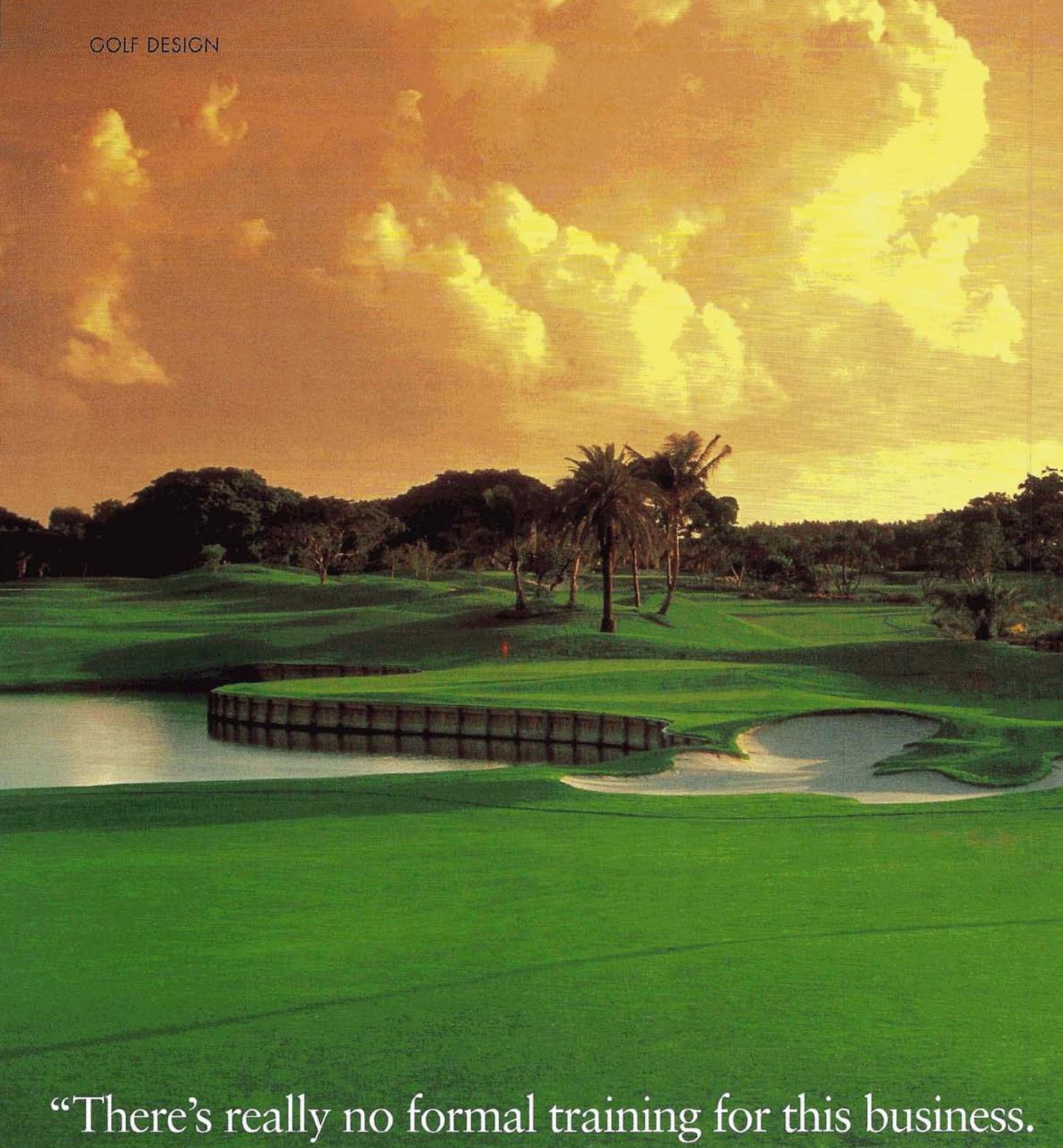
"Back when I started, we were building 400 to 500 new golf courses a year," he says. "Today, there's not a chance that anybody builds a new course. They're gonna rebuild what's already there."

Schulties saw that trend when he returned to Florida and quickly jumped into the field. He decided to concentrate on this area to avoid the extensive travel most designers require.

"You're basically living on an airplane, always moving around," he says. "When I got married [in 2003] and started a family [three kids], I didn't want to live like that." But in the last decade he had to adapt to market realities. New course work had dried up.

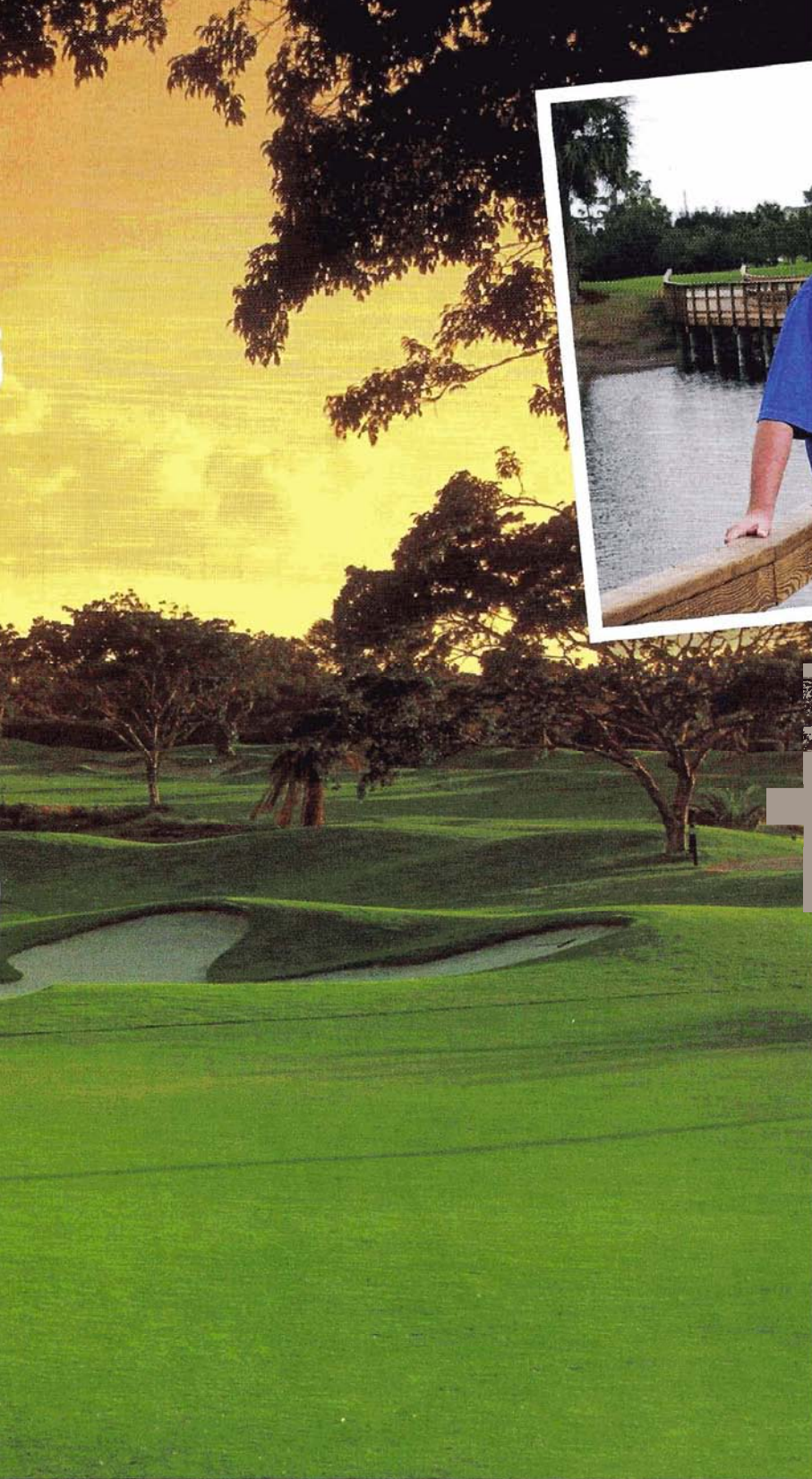
"I said I'll take what nobody else wants, and that's renovations. And that's not easy. With a new course you're dealing with one person, the developer. But with renovations you deal with 300 members and each one has their own ideas."

Among the South Florida courses he has worked on are Jupiter's Admirals Cove, Miami's Westview Country Club, Ironwood in Delray Beach,



“There’s really no formal training for this business.
You really just go out and learn on the job,
the way it used to be for everything.”

- KIPP SCHULTIES on designing golf courses



Schulties' projects include courses in California, Washington, North Carolina, and Trinidad and Tobago. However, his recent projects have kept him closer to home, including this course at the Boca Raton Resort & Club. Photography of the course by John R. Johnson.

Don Shula's Hotel and Golf Club in Miami, Boca Teeca (now known as Ocean Breeze Golf & Country Club) in Boca Raton and the Boca Raton Resort & Club. He seems particularly proud of the last effort, although quick to point out that Gene Bates Golf Design had the contract for the job and he worked as an independent designer for Bates in the process of setting up his own shop.

Schulties does not consider himself a golf historian, but he does appreciate the work of the well-known golf course designers. He points out that most of the famous courses started with an exceptional piece of land.

"If you have a great piece of property you don't so much design a course, and just lay it in there. And it's hard to judge the work of designers, unless two people have the same piece of property and the same budget."

From an artistic point of view, Schulties admires the work of Tom Fazio, but he recognizes the pros generally prefer tournament-ready courses, which are Jack Nicklaus' specialty. He actually has worked with Nicklaus on projects, including the Lost Tree Club where the golf legend lives. Ironically, he even redesigned a Nicklaus course, Mayacoo Lakes Country Club in West Palm Beach. That won him acclaim as one of the top 10 redesigns in 2007.

So, for all you ambitious youngsters coming out of college with no idea what you want to do, you can do worse than listening to mother. ■