

Green—how close he was to this valley and how important its preservation was. His ancestors were from here and his sympathies lie here.”

Graves kept Frank Lloyd Wright’s passion alive throughout the entire development. “Everything we’ve done here is exactly what should be done when building a first-class development.” The burgeoning resort includes three distinct types of housing: 200 condos (The Fairway Condominiums), 80 single family villas, and 80 suites in an apartment hotel. The hotel will serve as the hub for this enormous development. The structure houses a complete health center (swimming pool, weight room, aerobics, jacuzzi, and more), a pro shop, and a 150-seat dining room outfitted with Frank Lloyd Wright-designed furniture. Every window, and the entire back of the structure is nothing but windows, overlooks the new nine-hole golf course designed by two-time U.S. Open Champion Andy North and Roger Packard.

The question has to arise, “What would Frank Lloyd Wright think of this new development?” I asked and Graves answered: “Mr. Wright had some plans for cottages on the hillside near the restaurant for people who were sympathetic to this area.” It seemed Mr. Wright also intended to expand Spring Green’s facilities. All the new buildings were designed by Taliesin Associated Architects, the firm Mr. Wright founded in 1940. “I think Mr. Wright would be very happy with this development.” Graves is probably right. He talks a lot about people who are “sympathetic” to the area. He’s been the leader of the pack, ensuring adherence to Mr. Wright’s philosophy that “land, nature, buildings and furnishings should be treated as one.”

The environmental aesthetics of this resort took obvious priority. In one instance a box turtle native only to the fourth hole on the new nine-hole course had to be accommodated. There are yellow flags marking the turtle’s “stomping grounds.” To a golfer, that means off limits. Replanting the area was another prime consideration for Graves. All the areas have been planted back to native grasses, so as to harmonize with their surroundings. You won’t feel the function of this place. You’ll just see the

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main attraction: The view. Not only is the view incredible, but the scale of the project is almost hard to absorb as well.

The biggest challenge for Graves? “Getting the project done.” Another concern is finding a labor pool large enough to staff the additional facilities. Most of the contractors and subcontractors are locals. Harold Doede, Vice President of Rowland Construction who is building the project, also has an affection for Spring Green, having shared the valley for 22 years with long-time friend Robert Graves. Besides being a game of patience for Graves it has also been an opportunity to renew a friendship. Both men see this project as one of the most exciting opportunities either has experienced.

What next? Graves pauses, “I’m perfectly happy to finish this. It’s a realization of a dream I’ve had for a long, long time. I’m sure Frank Lloyd Wright would be pleased because the whole project is sensitive to the environment. Using his precepts of architecture we’ve created one of the finest four-season five-star resorts in the country.” There is quiet reserve in Graves’ response. Graves calls The Spring Green expansion his premier fulfillment, but his ambivalence is obvious. In completing his long-awaited project Robert Graves had to share a secret he’d been holding onto for 20 years. “A few years ago I took up golf, and around here I can go out at 6 a.m. dressed however I want and shoot a round of golf however I want. It’s not going to be like that much longer.” Robert Graves’ fortitude in staying with a project many might have abandoned paid off.

Perservance and adherence to his mentor’s teachings also play a key role in Michael Peterson’s career. He received his Master’s in Marketing and Real Estate in

1982 from UW-Madison and started his first development in 1981, while still in graduate school. Framed newspaper clippings of interviews with Professor Graaskamp hang in his office. Like his guide taught him, Peterson, whose undergraduate degree was in education, returns his practical experience back to the classroom. From 1984 to 1988 he taught real estate, business law and marketing principles at Madison Business College. Now he hires his previous students.

Several former students work with him at present. Randy Stenbroten assists with construction supervision at Mariner’s Cove. Another student, Kevin Stoll is a young, clean-cut Peterson protege overseeing a project up in the Dells.

“I’m swamped” was Peterson’s response to a request for an interview. It’s not surprising. Since 1981 he’s completed seven projects. He’s currently working on three condominium developments—Mariner’s Cove in Madison and two in Wisconsin Dells. He’s a one-man development company who sees to every element on every project...creatively. “Creativity was a big part of what Graaskamp taught. He strongly believed in it and emphasized it,” he said. Peterson remembers and quotes Graaskamp like a preacher would the Bible. “He taught that everything had to be first class. If you’re first class your likelihood for success is greater and you’re establishing a good track record.”

Peterson’s made his developments first class alright. There’s not an amenity lacking at Mariner’s Cove. From the luxurious interiors of the 14 different floor plans to the million-dollar clubhouse outfitted like a private health club, there’s nothing wanting here. Not only is everything high quality, it’s also highly visible.

Mariner’s Cove docks itself on the north side of Lake Mendota, moored between Mariner’s Inn and the Nau-Ti-Gal restaurants. With three stories of distinctive design this project is all up front. The clubhouse looms up behind a dramatically lit glass block wall at the entrance, encasing an entire lifestyle: two swimming pools, two whirlpools, weight room, sauna, and a conference/meeting center. Nearby, the tennis courts, basketball courts, and outdoor putting