

**Two developers and
their developments**

The art of deals and dreams

**By
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Two men have some mighty big shoes to fill. Both are developers whose mentors have died, leaving behind only their integrity and their legacy. Their developments are as different from each other as the developers themselves. One project is a four-season five-star resort nestled in the hills of the Wyoming Valley, overlooking the Wisconsin River. Development: The Spring Green. Developed by: Euroactividade, overseen by Robert Graves, managing director. The other is a luxury condominium project perched on the north shore of Lake Mendota. Development: Mariner's Cove. Developed by: Blue Water Development Company, Inc. with Michael Peterson at the helm.

Not yet a well-known name in Madison, Michael Peterson is building one of the most visible, amenity-laden condominium projects in Madison. He's one of the late Professor James Graaskamp's students made good. Peterson's other two projects, Lighthouse Cove and Sunset Cove are nearing completion in the Wisconsin Dells. He's a young, confident developer who prefers his projects command attention rather than him personally.

Then there's Robert Graves. A lot of Madisonians are familiar with Robert Graves and The Spring Green facilities. Gracious dinners at The Spring Green Restaurant, the only restaurant designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. A relaxing 18 holes at "The Springs" golf course. As of July 28, 1990, these familiar features were joined by some immense new arrivals.

After building a \$1.6 million ski lodge and refurbishing Wintergreen's ski slopes, Spring

Green skiers had their appetite whetted for this summer's bounty of additions. Under new ownership, The Spring Green is spending a lot of money to create what Robert Graves calls "a complete resort destination" within one year. Wintergreen enjoyed a good response to its reopening, even though the warm winter afforded less than ideal skiing conditions. How did all this come about? The story spans two decades, several men's ideals, and one man's patience.

The Spring Green Restaurant, the flagship project in this ever-growing development, opened in 1967. William Keland was the owner and Robert Graves was the manager. Keland subsequently built the ski hill and "The Springs" golf course—and then ran out of money. Though The Spring Green changed hands several times during the next 14 years, Robert Graves remained, even when it went into foreclosure in 1976. Growth Realty of California bought the property, held onto it for a few years until bought out by British Land of America. It ended up as a listing with Sotheby's International, who is responsible for its current ownership.

Sotheby's sold The Spring Green Resort on February 21, 1989, to Euroactividade AG, a Swiss firm specializing in luxury resorts. But there were parameters on the sale Euroactividade needed to justify purchasing its first "image" project in the United States. There were three stipulations. 1. An additional 9 holes; 2. Three hundred sixty units of accommodations; 3. A complete renovation of the Wintergreen ski hill. Euroactividade planned to pump \$40 million into this unique resort. Robert Graves started dusting off some blueprints.

**Robert Graves kept
Frank Lloyd Wright's passion
alive throughout the entire
development of the Spring
Green complex.**

He and his son Ross, and Ross' landscape architectural firm of Gilmore-Graves, worked on the master-plan for the resort community based on Euroactividade's wishes and Frank Lloyd Wright's precepts. The solution as Graves saw it was, "To develop a project sympathetic to the valley, to the environment, and to the people (of Spring Green) in relation to the lower Wisconsin River project, a cooperative project with the Department of Natural Resources." And Robert Graves deftly manages this natural beauty.

Graves graduated from UW-Madison in 1956 with a degree in landscape architecture and a lot of trophies for his days as a member of the rowing team. W-Club plaques now hang in his office, appropriately carpeted in a lush green. A drafting table, bins of organized blueprints, and a model of the entire Spring Green expansion complete his office.

Robert Graves is as much a part of Spring Green as is Taliesin. He and his family have lived in this pastoral valley for over 50 years, and his father managed Frank Lloyd Wright's property. Who better than Graves to oversee the blossoming of this resort? "Before Mr. Wright's death in 1959, I had the opportunity to spend a fair amount of time working with him on his later buildings and his last homes," he said. "I know how he felt about Spring