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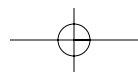
MAGAZINE

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Golden Woods Nursery And Landscape

Where Old World Craftsmanship
Meets New World Design

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(Below) Stockpiling the sod from the existing lawn will be used as mulch in the future fruit grove.

GOLDEN WOODS NURSERY AND LANDSCAPE

Where Old World
Craftsmanship Meets
New World Design

Written By: David Gallagher | Photos By: Andy Bertino



(Below and Right) Old school trellises were built by European craftsman with all pinned mortise and tenon joinery.



You might say that Denny Golden's love of horticulture first began as a child while helping his grandfather around their old Connecticut farm or lending a hand to his father, who was an avid garden enthusiast. However, Denny did not begin his working career as a contractor, nurseryman or landscaper there. After completing his college studies in New Hampshire in 1971, Denny took what was supposed to be one year off to go abroad. His destination was his sister's 50 acre sheep farm in the south of France. During his visit, Denny fell in love with the country and decided to buy a small property with a 700-year old farmhouse not far from his sister's. The quality of the craftsmanship around him was not lost on Denny and he set about a restoration project that would last more than 30-years. Learning everything he could from the local craftsman, a career in fine woodworking was the obvious next step.

After completing an apprenticeship at a fine-woodworking shop in Toulouse, he started his own woodworking business. Denny spent nearly ten years in France before returning to the United States in 1982. His next stop was California where his family had since relocated.

It did not take Denny long to realize the benefits of living and working in

California, and armed with his well honed woodworking skills, he started Golden Woods Fine Furniture. In addition, he went back to school, where he learned the management end of business and soon he was able to turn a profit. Denny explains, "In France, while restoring the house and barn and crafting woodwork, I learned to take pride in every detail of my work. I was able to take the old world craftsmanship and combine that with the new world expediency, which would bode well for me when I returned to the United States in 1982."

Then, in 1986, Denny Golden returned to his first love and purchased six acres of land high atop the hills of Escondido for the purpose of starting his own nursery. He named the new enterprise, Golden Woods Nursery and Landscape and began planting thousands of palm trees of many varieties to sell to landscape contractors and retail nurseries throughout southern California. Denny comments, "As my palms matured I brokered other grower's plants and created the network I needed for the day when my own plants would be mature and ready for sale. Things just began to naturally evolve and customers started asking me to install the plants. This led to installing irrigation as well, with which I had become very familiar, since I

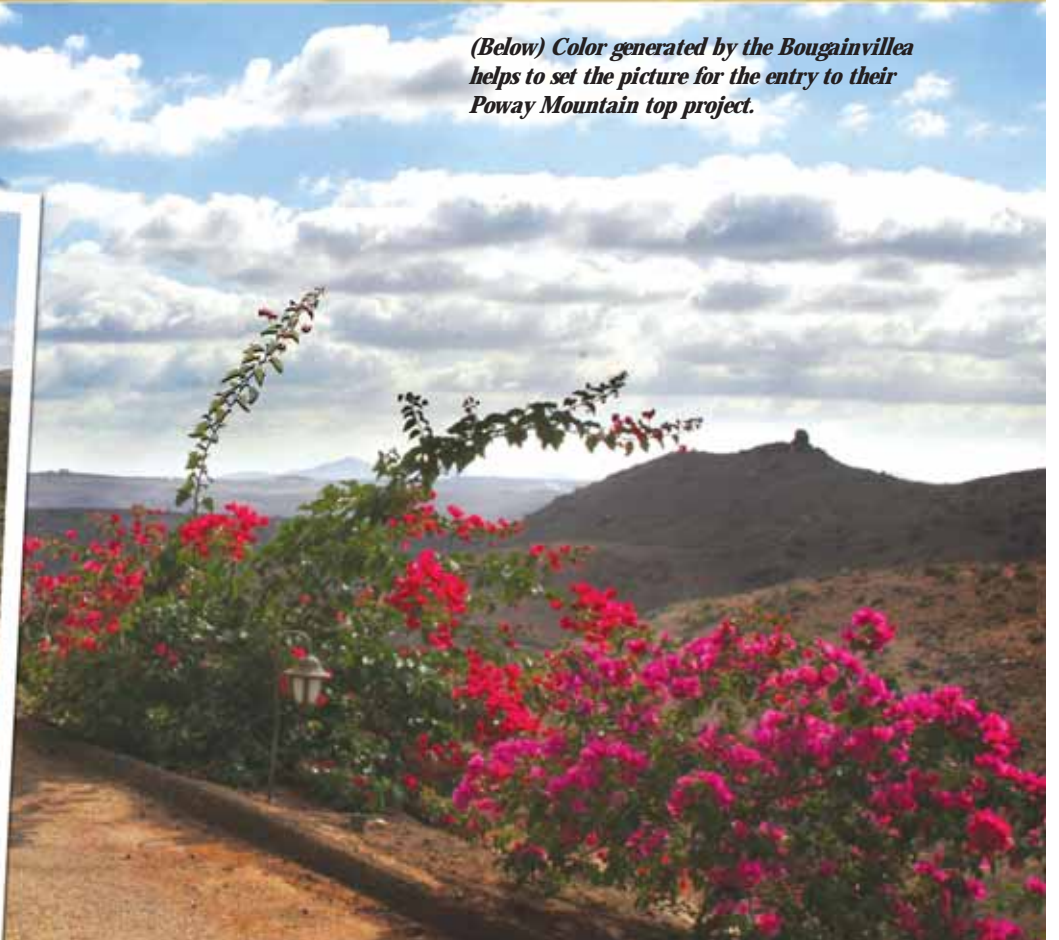
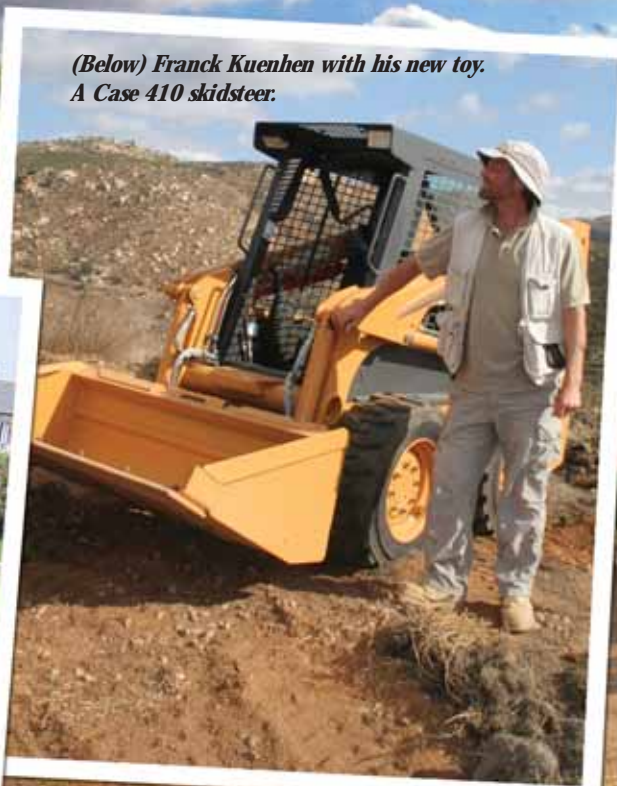
personally constructed all of the irrigation for the nursery. From here we began designing the plans and becoming involved in the architectural end of the business."

When Denny first started the nursery, he relied on his fine furniture and cabinet business to pay the bills. He explains, "There was an overlap of around five years where we operated the wood working business and the nursery and landscape business at the same time. We continue to utilize the physical shop today for building trellises, custom gates, doors and other wood design materials for our landscape business."

Golden Woods Nursery and Landscape was doing well, and it really began to take off when Denny unexpectedly met two very important people. Denny did not know it at the time, but he was about to meet his future business partner in a most unusual way. Frank Kuenhen and his mother, Yvette decided to travel the world in a motor home, and because they were from France, a mutual friend had given them Denny's name and address as a possible stop-off point. Frank and Yvette arrived at Golden Woods Nursery in 2000 and wouldn't you know it, they never left. The new friends really hit it off and soon Denny hired Frank on at the nursery. According to Denny, "Frank moved up the

(Below) Color generated by the Bougainvillea helps to set the picture for the entry to their Poway Mountain top project.

(Below) Franck Kuenhen with his new toy. A Case 410 skidsteer.





(Top Left) Canary Island Date Palms are boxed and ready for sale into their next job at Golden Woods. (Bottom Left) An old world patio garden at their job in Vista.



chain so quickly, that it was an obvious fit for him and me to start sharing the profits." Frank became an expert in all facets of the business, and he particularly excelled in the areas of lighting and design. The two partners complimented each other well, as did Frank's mother, Yvette and Denny. Over time Denny and Yvette built a wonderful relationship of their own and were eventually married in 2004.

Today, Denny and Frank along with ten fulltime employees specialize in high-end residential work. The bulk of their jobs consist of landscape design and installation, lighting, drainage, garden

walls, pools and water features, natural rock features and a variety of other old world and modern architectural features. Their work includes anything from a simple yet elegant \$50,000 remodel to the complete landscape and hardscape design and construction of a 35-acre estate that they are currently working on in Poway.

This approximately \$400,000 project is truly a massive undertaking and encompasses everything that Golden Woods has to offer. From the traditional Italian water features and retaining walls to the access roads that meander along the fruit groves, to the negative edge swimming pool, Golden Woods has

designed and planned the job to the customer's exact specifications. In addition the job calls for a marble pool deck, fireplace, surrounds that require precast elements, extensive lighting, wooden and wrought iron trellises, raised rose garden beds, dozens of 35 ft. Queen Palms, driveway entrances, and electric gates. In all, more than 2,000 plants of many varieties will be installed, and to give you

an idea of just how comprehensive this job is, a large standby generator, new gas lines, propane tanks, a high volume water filter and treatment

station, as well as high pressure fire protection on the roof and house perimeter will also be incorporated.

Attention to detail is what sets Golden Woods Nursery and Landscape apart from the usual landscape contractor. The Queen Palm's for instance will be installed on a slope adjacent to the negative edge pool, so that the tops can be viewed from the deck, where they will serve as the perfect frame of the horizon and the ocean beyond. As an added challenge, it should be noted that most all of the excavation on the job site was done in hard rock and granite.

According to Denny, one of Golden Woods' most challenging jobs was in 2005 on a major project out in Fairbanks Ranch. While the current project they are working on is

formal Italian, the Fairbanks job was very tropical and resort-theme oriented. Specifically, it was an "Indiana Jones" theme complete with a custom sculpted outdoor fireplace that resembled a sunken archeological dig. So convincing was the detail on this feature that it included a stone column that appeared to have fallen over with vines growing all over it. Denny comments, "The detail on this entire project was simply extraordinary. The client knew exactly what he wanted and we even imported two very talented fine wood workers from France to construct the detailed carvings that included a French vineyard with sculpted trellises and curved

grape arbors. All of the woodwork was pinned mortis and tenoned joinery constructed without fasteners or connectors. In addition, gas tiki torches were fashioned criss-cross all around the pool and fireplace area, as well as throughout the property. In keeping with the already amazing features, the owner requested that the torches be able to be lit by pressing a single button. Golden Woods of course complied. To top it all off, the client also requested that all of the flowering plants sequencing be permanent."

Golden Woods Nursery and Landscape are proud to have been able to work with and fulfill their client's landscape dreams since their inception in 1986. All of this would really not have been possible without the six-acre nursery facility located in the lush hills of North County. Customers and prospective clients are able to walk the grounds and view a variety of landscape ideas all within a park like atmosphere. There are three ponds that hold over 60,000 gallons of water and feature natural rock waterfalls, a large wooden entry bridge, a 100-foot long stream bed, and hundreds of Koi color. Denny Golden adds, "We try and integrate a variety of themes, so that our clients can get a feel for what they might like. There are walkway style lawn areas all along the ponds that exhibit myriad choices of plant materials and landscape ideas."

Accomplishing all of these extraordinary projects requires the right tools and equipment. Denny has relied on D³ Equipment out of El Cajon from the very beginning. He explains, "The first Case skid steer we purchased was so problem free, that we just stayed with Case from

there on out. The DeNardi's and everyone at D³ Equipment have been great to work with. They are very honest people and have stood behind everything they have sold us, and quite frankly their service is fabulous." Today, Golden Woods owns and operates three Case skid steers including a 90XT, a 95XT and the all new 410.

Golden Woods Nursery and Landscape continues to raise and market a huge variety of palm trees, as well as a vast supply of Cycads. They have learned much and have done very well since their beginning. However, Denny is quick to point out that any and all success he and his partner Frank have realized is due to their terrific group of employees. Denny continues, "It has been instilled in everyone who works at Golden Woods to be courteous and professional at all times. In addition our employees go the extra mile each day to ensure that their jobsite is always clean and free of debris. We keep a job trailer on every project to make sure that we always leave the jobsite clean and organized." Denny also points out that his crews are just like family. As a matter of fact many of the employees are related and therefore work very well together. To help maintain cohesion and a team spirit among

their workers, Denny and Frank hold a monthly employee barbeque that is really more like a French buffet, courtesy of Yvette Golden. At the conclusion of each event they include some sort of competitive sport such as riflery, archery, tennis, basketball or bachi ball. There is of course a cash prize for the winner, which makes it all the more fun and the competition fierce!

Denny Golden concludes, "At Golden Woods our main goal is to assist our clients in fulfilling their dream landscapes. Our modern designs and installations utilize a selection of San Diego's premier trees, palms and plants, cultivated and grown in our very own nursery or by one of our nearby botanical partners. The lighting we design into our jobs really sets off the entire concept, getting the customer outside on those wonderful warm California nights to enjoy even more of their newly acquired landscape. Please feel free to visit our website at www.goldenwoods.com or better yet come and see our facility first hand at 29252 Lawrence Welk Lane, Escondido, California. Please give us a call at 760-749-5610 and let us know if we can be of assistance."



(Left) A 35' Canary Island Date Palm being craned into their National City Municipal job. (Above) An elegant pool entry at their jog in Del Mar.