

Magazine SAN DIEGO

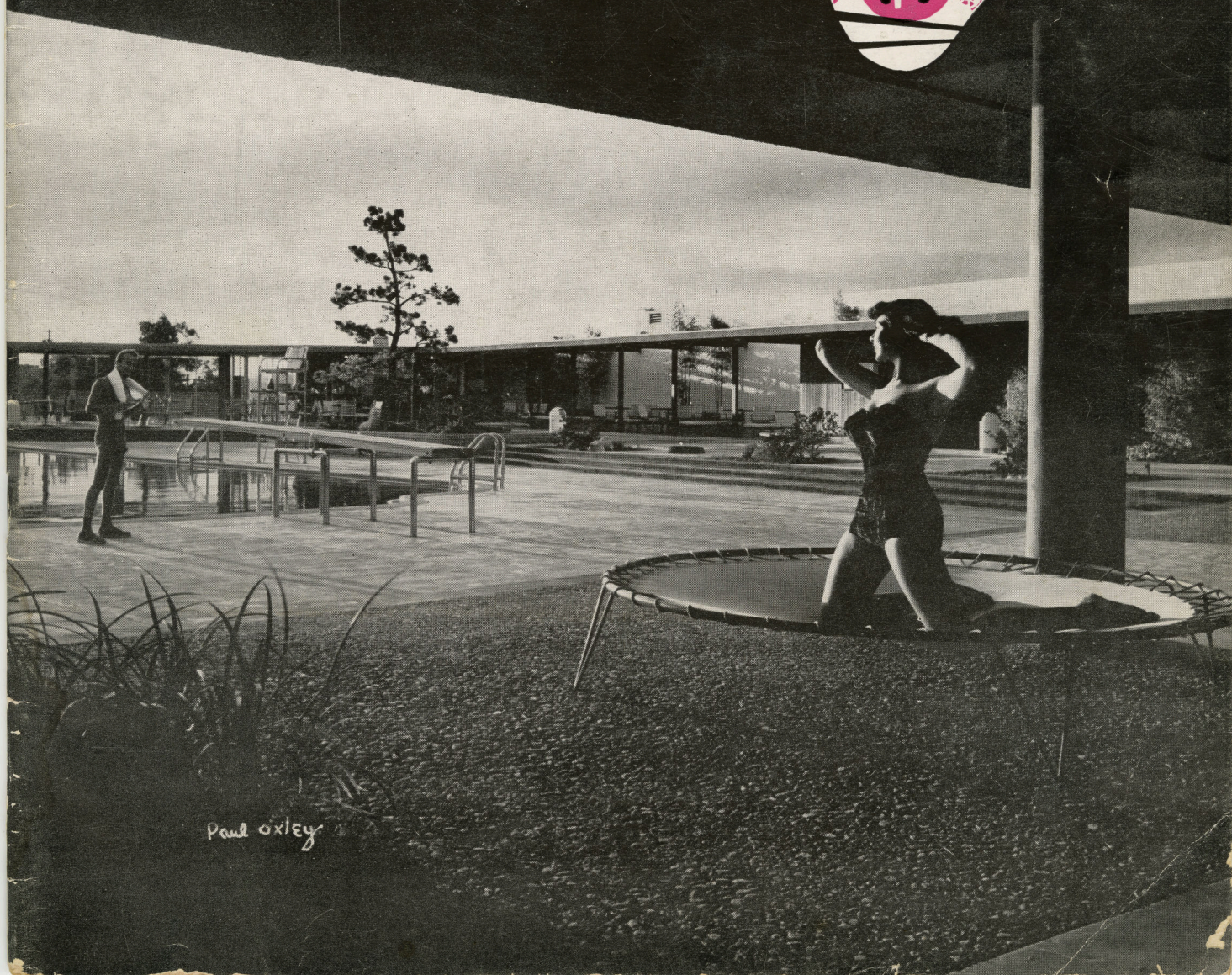
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35 Cents

Christmas Issue

Mission Valley Dream

Old Globe Portfolio



Paul O'Leary



PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL OXLEY—MAXWELL STUDIO

FROM CODY TO MUELLER AND MAHY

The team of Carl Mueller and Robert Mahy, general contractors, drew the much-sought-after and challenging job of bossing the construction of Architect William Cody's bold and spectacular design for the Country Club's \$500,000 plant. Without question, it is the area's most imaginative and beautiful building in many, many years.



In January, Mission Valley's velvet fairways will be the scene of the \$15,000 San Diego open, the big event of the area's golf year and a part of the regular PGA tournament circuit, attracting big-name tournament players.

lush and fertile and tests disclosed ample underground water sources. The land rolled gracefully between the valley walls. It was five minutes from downtown San Diego via (at that time) the Sixth Avenue Extension. Hughes started negotiations with Edgar Levi, an heir of Adolph Levi, and finally obtained the property.

Hughes, not a large man physically but possessor of an infinite enthusiasm for worthy ideas, now had 225 acres of cow pasture but little money. And golf courses cost money—lots of it. Golf architects, for example, are highly paid. Acres of fine grass, as any one who has ever planted a 50-foot lawn is aware, require a tremendous investment to start and maintain. One perfect golf green, let alone 27, is an expensive undertaking, with its imported seed that will yield an area of carpet-like smoothness 100 feet in diameter. Golfers are a peculiar breed who thrive on trouble, and take masochistic delight in torturing themselves with such frustrations as sand traps and bunkers. And sand traps and bunkers also cost money. So Hughes went out to raise the necessary wherewithal.

Incorporated as the Mission Valley Golf Club, Hughes sought local financing. He needed \$250,000 to get under way, and even in the lush war years that kind of money was hard to come by for such projects as making a landscaped lawn out of a cow pasture. He talked to hundreds of people, and sold stock in blocks as small as \$10. But he still was a long way from his minimum financial requirements, when, after six months, he decided to call for help.

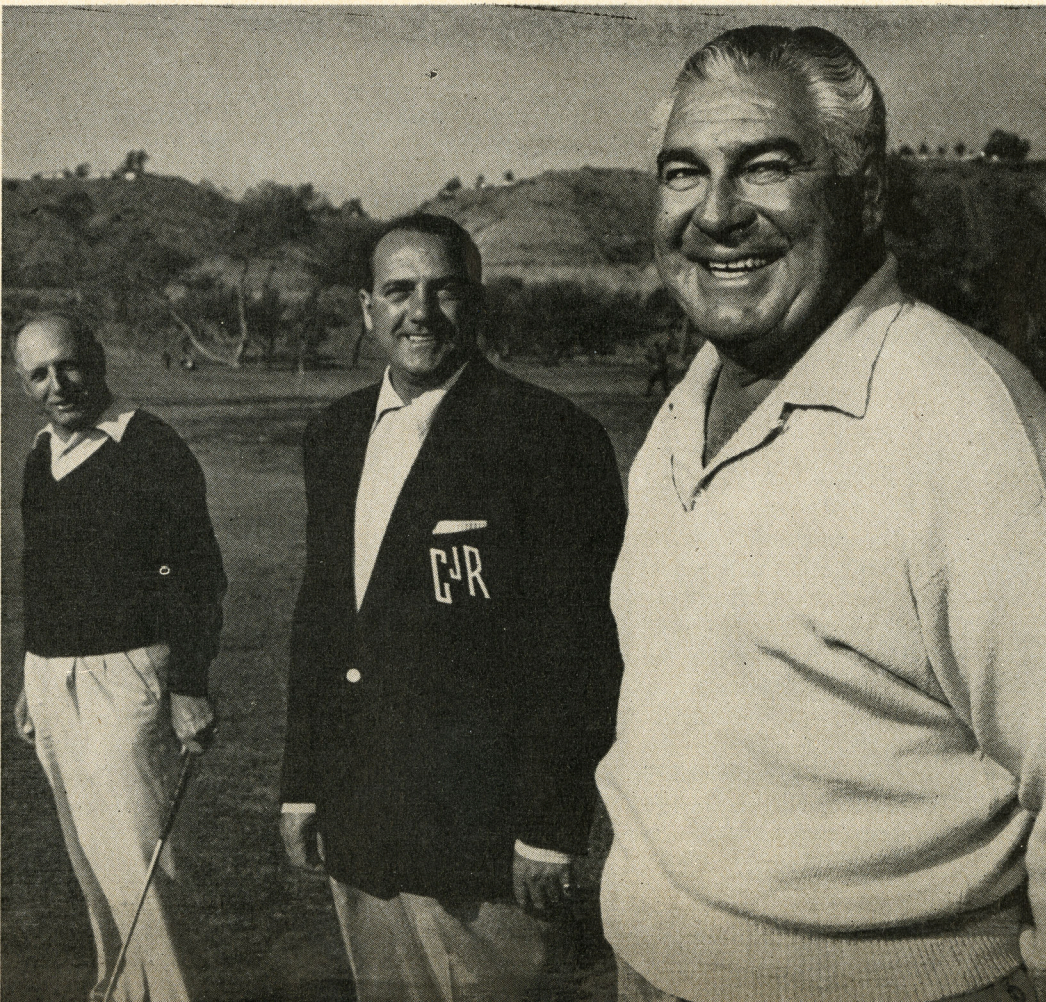
The man he called upon is one of the best-known figures of the golfing world, Johnny Dawson. Dawson, who played in many tournaments against the great Bobby Jones and never was defeated by the master, was public relations man for the R. G. Spaulding Co., manufacturers of sporting goods, including golf paraphernalia. Because of this connection, Dawson, recognized as one of the finest golfers in the country, was unable to participate in any other than invitational tournaments and still maintain his amateur status, which perhaps explains why he never won the National Open. And Dawson, a highly personable chap, was a

friend of many prominent people, people with money.

Hughes took Dawson for a tour of his cow pasture, and Dawson was sold; sold on the cow pasture, that is, but not on Hughes' methods of raising money. At Dawson's urging, Hughes dissolved his corporation and returned the stockholders their investments. Then, with Dawson as president, a new corporation, the Mission Valley Country Club, was formed and Dawson took over the fund-raising task. He went about it differently. He took five or six tycoons out on the fairways of exclusive clubs, gave them each a polite lesson on stance and grip, and talked them into putting up money—in big chunks. By these methods, he soon sold all the available stock in the new enterprise. (The club now has 80 stockholding members.)

With Dawson as president and Hughes as secretary of the corporation and general manager, work at last got under way. Greens were constructed and planted, fairways were contoured, traps and bunkers were constructed, trees were

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One of the most impressive line-ups of professionals boasted by any golf club corrects the hooks and slices of Mission Valley members. From left to right, the trio includes Frank Rodia, former Pacific Northwest Champion; Charles Rizzo, senior club professional, and Olin Dutra, winner of the National Open in 1934.



Gracefully and unusually curved columns give the entrance colonnade a long and architecturally impressive look. Machine-sprayed a chocolate tone, they were built up with plaster starting from a four inch bearing pipe. Larson Brothers of San Diego are the plastering contractors, using some 10,000 yards of lath and plaster in the job. The firm also used the new sprayed-on colored acoustic plaster.

added and wells were dug. A small frame building to house the pro-shop and lunch counter was put up near the first tee and, with a benign nature assisting, the new course was ready for play in a surprisingly short time.

In order to preserve a loose control, a few memberships were sold in the Mission Valley Country Club, giving the new course a semi-private character. This precluded opening the course to everybody with a beat-up 9-iron, and at the same time acceptable non-members were encouraged to play its 27 challenging holes on a green-fee basis. At this point, mem-

bership fees and dues were what might be described as "nominal." First president of the club (as distinguished from the holding corporation) was K. G. Bitter. He's still the president and chairman of the Advisory Board, which represents the club membership in all dealings (under contract) with the holding corporation. Hughes, secretary of the corporation, sits with the Advisory Board in an ex-officio capacity.

The club maintained its semi-private status until Hughes, in 1952, as the result of conversations with many golfers who played the course, conceived the idea of

turning it into a club whose facilities would be available to members only. He took his project up with the board of directors, and they finally agreed to go ahead on the condition that he could sell 700 memberships—at \$300 each—within six months. Once having accepted the idea, the corporation's Board of Directors got behind the project enthusiastically. Taking part in the momentous decision were President Dawson, Vice President Martin Wahl, Treasurer B. J. Brimmer and Directors Charles E. Warren, Jim Bannister and John A. Donnelley. For them, a hectic period began.

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