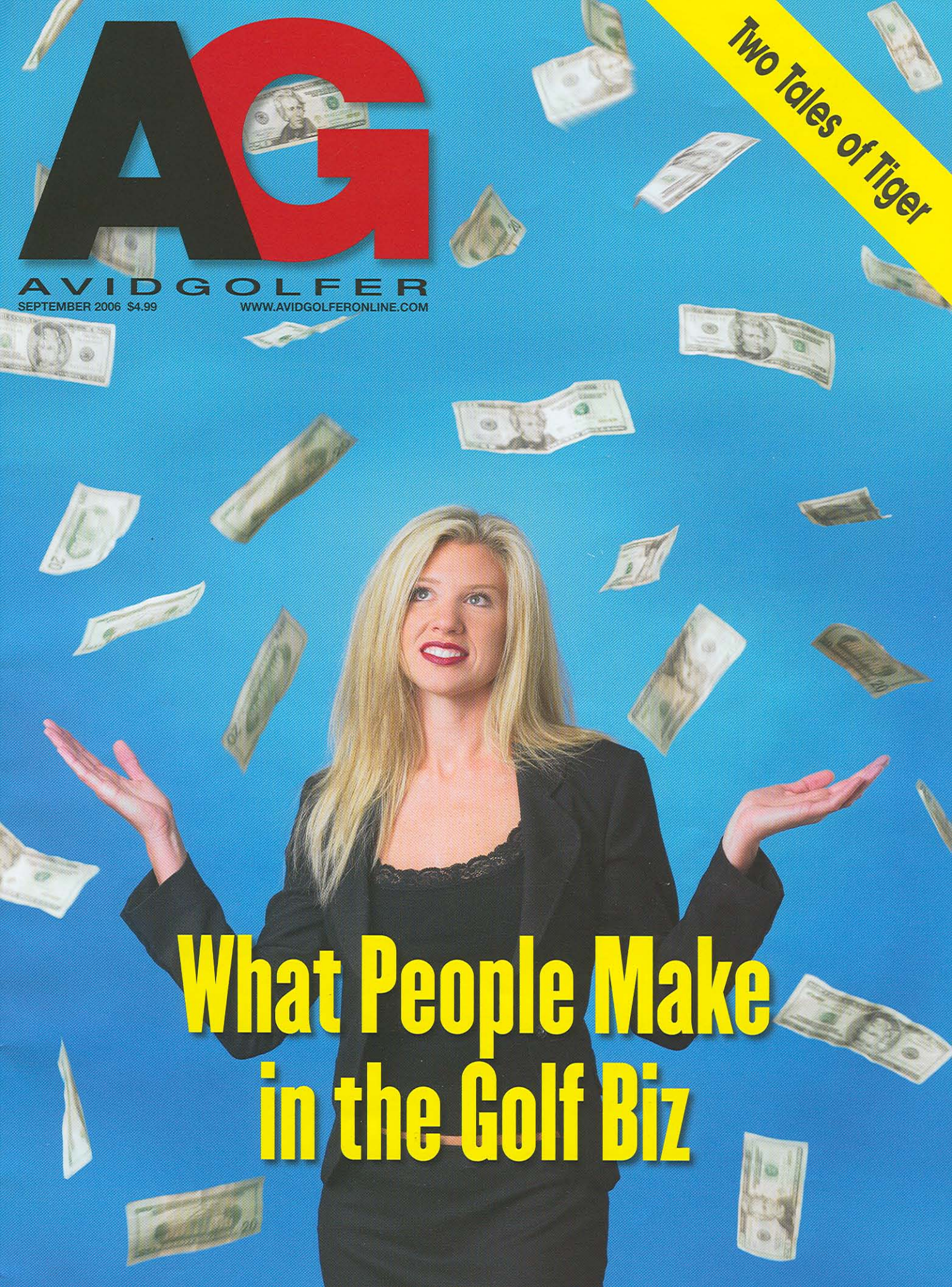




AG

AVIDGOLFER

SEPTEMBER 2006 \$4.99

WWW.AVIDGOLFERONLINE.COM

Two Tales of Tiger

What People Make in the Golf Biz

Richard Drummond Davis

Director of Design and President,
Richard Drummond Davis Architect, Inc.

This custom-home architect wanted to expand into the golf world. Dallas National's award-winning clubhouse isn't a bad first attempt.

By Sara Stoltz

THE grand clubhouse at Dallas National is a true work of art, and it's a damn shame.

Unlike palatial Highland Park estates you can drive your kids past at Christmastime to gaze upon the brightly lit mansions, the Dallas National clubhouse can't even be seen from the heavily guarded access road one must drive to reach it. Ask any golfer who's tried to finagle a tee time there – it's next to impossible to get past the security gate to make your way up the tree-lined drive.

Dallas National members are spoiled with the unequaled, Tom Fazio-designed course and its accompanying pristine clubhouse.

It's just that hardly anyone else will ever get to see it.

Built by Richard Drummond Davis in 2004, the clubhouse reflects the quiet dignity of the club. It's not ostentatious, but pure class. It's like the home you wish you had. And no wonder: the architect spends most of his time designing custom homes for Dallas elites.

But the clubhouse made news for something other than Davis' design. In April 2003, the almost-completed shell burned to the ground, and construction had to start anew.

"The stonework was 90 percent completed, and the metal roof was about 75 percent done," he said. "It was such a tragedy to lose those beautiful materials."

He didn't change much from the original design, only the height of a single beam in the men's locker room ceiling.

The rich, earthy browns of the stained alder wood and the muted grays of the indigenous stones, Leuters limestone mixed with Granbury stone, blend in seamlessly with the landscape. So does the clientele; on a Wednesday afternoon, Lee Trevino sits back in a leather-and-wood chair and chats with Dale Hansen and an endless stream of members. Davis himself is a minor celebrity, as most of the members and staff know him by name.

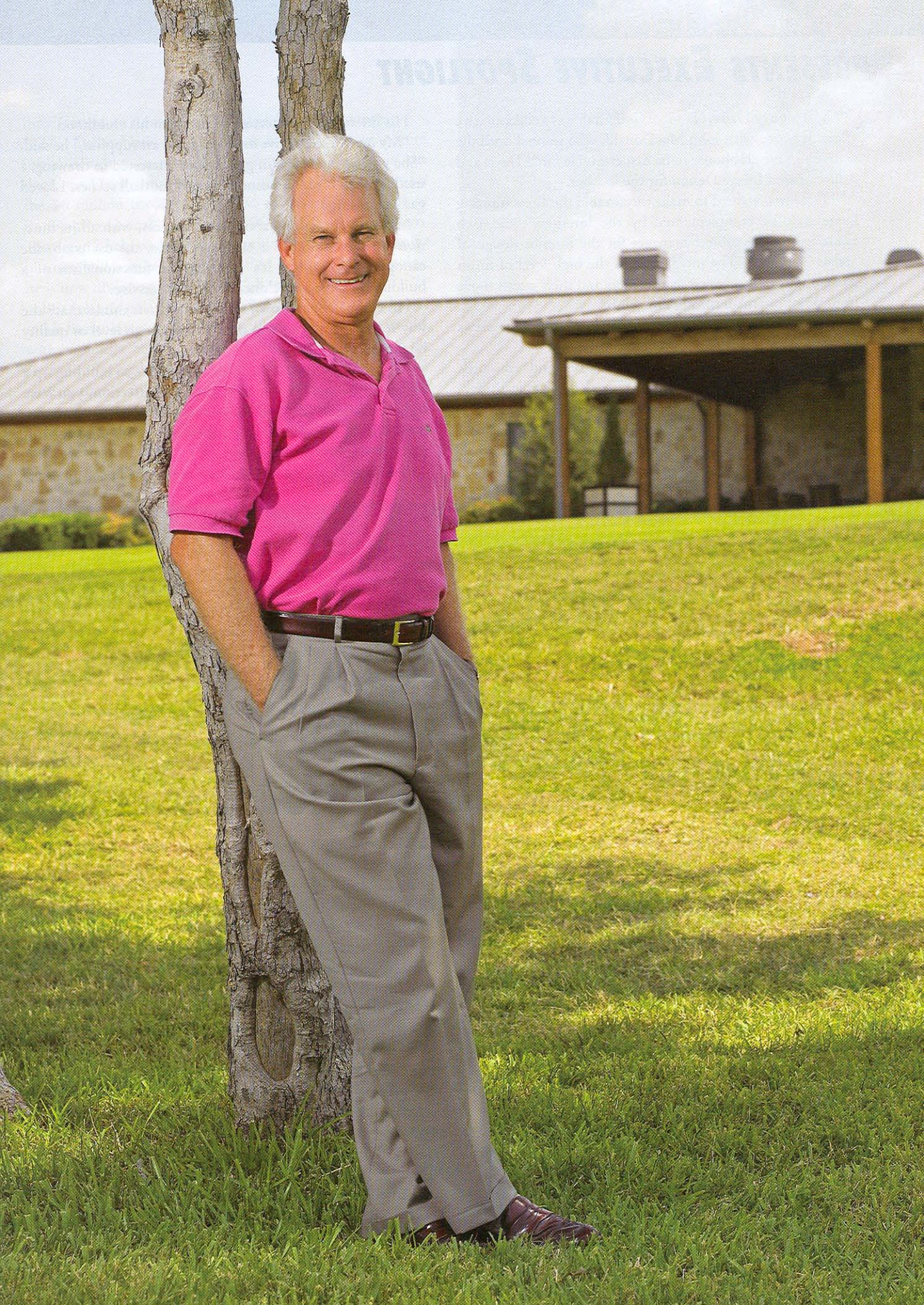
Although the Texas land is parched and dry in the blistering August heat, the course is a carpet of luscious green. On the 18th hole, it extends all the way up to the wraparound porch of the clubhouse, so sitting in the shade on the deck and watching the golfers is akin to watching the kids play in the backyard.

Once inside, the high ceilings, huge fireplace and cool, welcoming stone floors almost beg golfers to stay indoors and enjoy an Arnold Palmer or two. This is the epitome of Davis' philosophy, both with hospitality buildings such as clubhouses and restaurants, and with home design.

"You are realizing people's dreams and fantasies," he said.

Everyone who sees the building agrees. For Tommy Koops, a Houston resident who played Dallas National in 2004 and bought a membership on the spot, the course is a purist's dream.

"It's a golf paradise, and the clubhouse caters to that," he said. "I'm originally from Fort Worth, and there's not much topography that's as dramatic as Dallas National. The clubhouse is a perfect fit. I like the patio on the 18th hole, where you get that startling view."



PRESENTS EXECUTIVE SPOTLIGHT

The design of Dallas National Golf Club was a collaborative effort. It began with John MacDonald, who wanted both the course and the clubhouse to be first class. He hired Davis and Atlanta-based Image Design for the interior.

"He [Davis] wanted to make certain that the Texas hunting lodge style be complemented by the interiors," said Bob Francisco, senior project manager for the interior design of Dallas National. "The integration of the high level of finish and stonework is seamless as members and their guests move from point of arrival through the club."

Davis's architectural plan focuses on the panoramic views from the back porch.

"If you are designing a golf clubhouse, and you miss the views of the course – you've missed the whole thing," Francisco said.

Image Design added custom woven leather rockers and drink tables fashioned from logs to complete Texas flavor of the project.

His interest in architecture stems from his childhood.

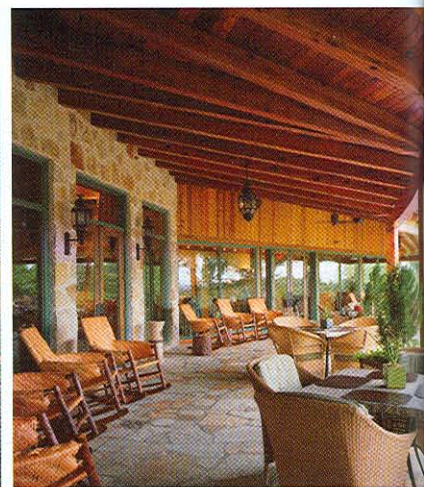
"My mom used to give me blocks and art supplies," he said. "She was instrumental in getting me interested in drawing. I used to draw birds and dinosaurs and football scenes. I loved gas stations, too."

"There is something about a gas station, with all its functions to accommodate a moving vehicle: the car wash, the canopies, the garage. It's amazing the functionalism of a building to serve a machine. It's very expressive."

His company has grown slowly, but Davis thinks that's the way it must be in order to maintain the high level of quality he provides his clients.

"Custom residential work isn't conducive to building up a big staff," he said. "To achieve close to perfection, you have to be a perfectionist, and the people who hire you want the owner of the firm working on their home. It's hard to turn that over to several people."

Although Davis was trained under renowned post-modern-



For Davis, the jump from custom homes to clubhouses was a logical one. "Custom homes mean tailoring a home for someone – it's an expression of their personality, lifestyle and taste," he said.

He should know a little something about the lifestyles and tastes of Dallasites; born and raised in North Dallas, Davis went from Hillcrest High School to the University of Texas, and then on to graduate school at Princeton. He spent a few years in New York City with a prestigious firm, Hardy, Holzman and Pheiffer, before returning to his roots and opening his own firm in 1977.

In New York City, he was involved in projects all over the country – from the Denver Symphony Hall, a remodel of Union Train Station in Cincinnati into a performing arts center, and a civic center in Madison, Wis. But when the firm ran out of projects, Davis came home and started a firm that is now dissolved.

"New York is so exciting, so it was tough to come back to a small pond," he said. "I wanted to go out on my own to challenge myself."

ist Michael Graves, homes in Dallas tend to be less edgy. But Davis doesn't mind, and realized that he didn't need to always push the envelope with his designs. He enjoys listening to clients' ideas and dreams for their homes, and stays involved in the project until it is completed.

"I'm a people pleaser," he said. "Occasionally, some clients want something a bit more far out, but that's fairly unusual."

"I love doing traditional homes, because it is neat to take traditional forms, that people are used to seeing, and recombining them to look interesting. Plus, today's homes have a lot of different requirements and spaces: media rooms, workout rooms and bathrooms big enough to live in."

Davis, who has designed homes for some very upper-echelon clients such as Kenny Rogers (the former Texas Ranger, not the singer), wants to expand from single-family homes. He recently was selected to design The Residences at The Grand Lodge, a premier project in Craig Ranch's "The Settlement" community, and interviewed for some high-end housing near Walnut Hill and Central Expressway. He also renovated a single-story office warehouse in North Dallas

into Yvette's, an upscale restaurant and cocktail lounge.

The Dallas National job, which took about a year from initial design to construction, just sort of "walked in the door," as Davis described it. He received due accolades for the \$6 million project – *Golf Inc.* magazine gave it one of its top two annual awards in 2006 for Clubhouse Design. That might help with name recognition, though he said most business still comes through word of mouth – case in point, he is now designing David Craig's home.

But golf and golf clubhouses will always hold a special place in his heart. He started playing golf when he was 9 years old, with his family. His dad, who's 88, still plays twice a week. He started at Spring Valley Country Club, which was a nine-hole course, then went to Glen Lakes Country Club. His father eventually became a charter member of Royal Oaks.

Davis, who has memberships at The Northwood Club and Dallas National, gets to play a few times a week. He recently shot a 75 at Dallas National, and manages to squeeze in a

IN THE BAG

Handicap: 6

Memberships: The Northwood Club and Dallas National Golf Club

Best Round: 2-under-par 70 at Dallas National

Favorite memory on a course: "Recently I was following a scratch golfer at Dallas National, Bill Woods. After he hit a 4-iron on a 210-yard par-3 two feet from the cup, I was next on the tee and actually hit his ball with mine."

Holes in one: 15 years ago on a nine-hole course, Lawrenceville School in New Jersey

Favorite Courses: Teeth of the Dog in Casa de Campo, Dominican Republic. "It's got six ocean holes, and it's a tropical course. I suggest going when it's cold up here and warm down there." Also Spyglass Hill in California.

game or practice round each week.

"I'm a firm believer in the nine-hole round," he said.

He has two sons, one who recently graduated from Baylor and another who is a junior at Harvard. Both take after their father in different ways; the older plays golf, and the younger is interested in conceptual art.

"I'm hoping that turns into an interest in architecture," Davis said.

From clubhouse design, he would like to spread out into resort work. He's already done remodels of restaurants, both in Dallas and St. Kitts, in the Caribbean.

"Only recently have we gotten into a position to do other building types," he said. "The architecture in resorts tends to be more fantasy and experiential."

No matter where he expands, Davis is always looking to improve and innovate.

"I can't decide which I'm more excited about," he said, "the refinement of my ability to design great architecture or the refinement of my golf game."