



## Why Boca Is Talking About

### JOHN CREAN CEO, BROKEN SOUND CLUB

**FROM GREEN TO GREEN:** John Crean may come by his fascination with all things green naturally; he's a native of Ireland who came to the U.S. on a student visa in 1986 for an internship in hospitality management. When he returned to school, his name was drawn in a green-card lottery—so back to the states he went in 1989. From the moment he landed his breakthrough job at 23 as manager of the prestigious Long Island Muttontown Club, Crean knew he was on the right career path. "I liked the club industry," he says. "It was a little bit more intimate than hotel management." Today, Crean is responsible for 367 employees at Broken Sound in Boca, a "\$30 million organization, made up of two golf courses, three clubhouses, and all the operations that go along with that." Among them: a major environmental initiative that has Broken Sound in the national spotlight.

**THE GREAT COMPOST CAPER:** It started as a modest plan to replace bottled water in golf carts with recyclable cups and water stations. Soon, Crean and his board of governors were leading the charge to build a composting plant at the country club—a process that recycles organic food waste and plant debris and converts it into a mixture that enriches the golf course soil and reduces the club's reliance on insecticides. Broken Sound became the first club in Florida (and second in the country) to achieve the Golf Environmental Organization's (GEO) certification, golf's premier "sustainability award" and its gold standard for environmental stewardship.

**THE SAVINGS:** Capital investment in the facility, which debuted this spring, is about \$450,000, but Crean says the club is on track to start recouping that investment in a matter of years. After processing the organic waste in a "digester," compost is produced that is cured and that "binds" to fertilizer and pesticide. "We end up using less fertilizer, and we are reducing expenses," says Crean, 44. "We've reduced our garbage pickup by \$90,000, and we'll eventually reduce our expenses on the chemicals by \$100,000—so that's \$190,000 worth of savings by the third year."

**BROKEN SOUND AS A PLAYER:** "Through the [club's] leadership, we have tried to say that Broken Sound is no longer just a place in the northwest sector—it needs to be a player in the city of Boca," says Crean of a community celebrating 27 years. "Six years ago I was heavily involved in bringing the Allianz Championship [the Champions Tour event played at the Old

Course] to Broken Sound. I'm a big believer in this city; it's a great destination. ... We want to be somebody here."

**KUDOS:** Broken Sound was one of six GEO-certified golf courses listed on *National Geographic's* website, just one example of the international exposure the club has received due to the compost project. "The Boca Raton City Council gave the club its own proclamation for our stewardship," Crean says. "We are running educational programs to show how we are doing it."

**WHAT'S NEXT:** The club is working toward carbon neutrality; Crean likes the idea of some day having a cap and trade on carbon credits. In the meantime, the club has "solarized" its hot-water heaters and the pool, and Crean is dreaming of a photovoltaic cell system for the parking areas that would convert solar energy to electricity. "The leadership that is required here is people stepping outside their comfort zone and having a strategic, long-term vision," he says. "We want to be leaders in environmental golf."