



D.J. Scheffler & Nye, Inc.'s

Years of Expertise and Diversified Equipment Fleet Elevates Them to the Top of the Deep Foundation and Drilling Construction Trade

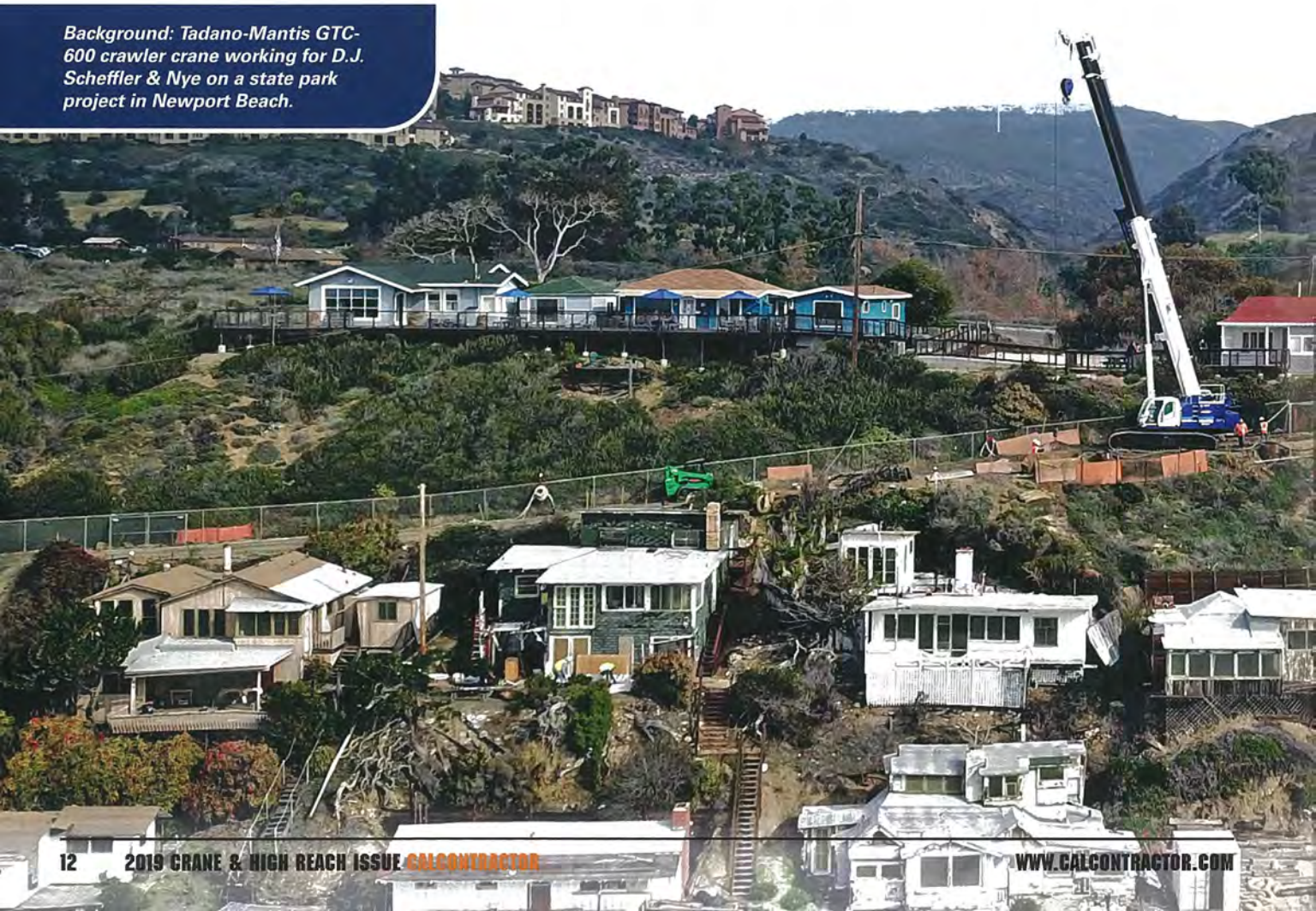
By Brian Hoover

To say that Dale Scheffler is driven would certainly be an understatement. It almost seems that he has never been without a job, having more than a dozen employers before even finishing high school. He also followed in his father's footsteps early on when he owned and operated his own window cleaning business. His interest in

construction got its jump-start during his sophomore year at Los Altos High School in Hacienda Heights. He joined a two-hour class each day where the students were tasked with a contest on who could best design a home that would actually later be built and then auctioned off. Dale won the best design, and as the project coordinator, he began contacting

vendors for donations on building materials like lumber and windows. It was a very successful program that gave Dale his first taste of what being a contractor might be like. In the end they were unable to build and sell a house due to 22 percent interest rates at the time, so instead, he and his crew of students demolished and performed

Background: Tadano-Mantis GTC-600 crawler crane working for D.J. Scheffler & Nye on a state park project in Newport Beach.



tenant improvements on another structure they later turned in to an administration building.

When the time came to begin attending college, Dale went to work for a concrete contractor instead, building foundations on projects like Industry Hills Country Club. He entered into the apprentice program and was the first of many to win and have his name put upon the Cement Apprentice Award Trophy, that is now highly coveted with a nationwide competition in all 50 states and Canada. "I got into the concrete business right out of high school in 1979 when I went to work for Eckert Brothers, I found myself doing side jobs within a couple of weeks under the name D.J. Scheffler Construction," says Dale Scheffler. "I actually ended up working 40 to 50 weekends

a year on these side projects where I was building patios and driveways for private residents." After three years of apprenticeship, Scheffler went to work for Ben F. Smith where he quickly began prepping to become a foreman. "I was young and was lucky to have the opportunity to learn from others that were a lot older and more seasoned than I was at the time," continues Scheffler. "So, I really learned from what I considered to be the best in the business not really knowing just how valuable that would be down the road."

Scheffler eventually decided to go out on his own and officially went full-time on the last day of October 1985, just 3 ½ years after entering the concrete trade. His company grew quickly and initially focused on traditional concrete contracting work.

Before long, Scheffler began to see a need for a drill rig that could install piles on hillsides. He pursued this idea, and with the help of a brilliant friend and engineer, the hillside drilling rig became a reality, and the demand for his drilling expertise and new rig skyrocketed. The move from flat concrete work to the very specialized art of deep foundation drilling and shoring had been made, and it was a real game changer for Scheffler as he moved to hire more skilled personnel and engineers, as well as adding more equipment. By 1989, Scheffler was not only building, but also designing most of the projects, and along with this new direction, came a new name, D.J. Scheffler, Inc.

Today, D.J. Scheffler is one of Southern California's most active landslide contractors, with some





Above: Dale Scheffler of D.J. Scheffler & Nye, Inc. with Gary Bach, Sales Representative, Coastline Equipment Crane Division and Neil Goodale, Division Manager, Coastline Equipment Crane Division.

Right: Tadano-Mantis GTC-600 crawler crane purchased from Coastline Equipment Crane Division.



sort of landslide work on his books just about at all times. To put it in layman's terms, Scheffler drills and excavates deep shafts to place steel rebar and concrete into deep cast in drilled holes (CIDH) on landslide stabilization projects throughout Southern California and beyond. "Our work requires the use of drilling rigs, cranes and other support equipment like excavators, skid steer loaders and dozers to place 10 to 100-foot pieces of rebar cages and I-beams that might weigh 4,000 pounds into deep holes along hillsides," says Scheffler. "It is not easy work, but it is gratifying and knowing that we are one of the few contractors capable of doing this sort of work safely and correctly helps preserve a special niche for our company."

An excellent example of the kind of work Scheffler does would be an oceanside state park project that his company is on right now. "The job is a \$3.4 million contract that we are on with one of the general contractors that we like to work with whenever

possible. It is an extensive restoration project for a coastal state park in Newport Beach that is renovating all of the historical vacation homes and structures in the park for families to further enjoy on their vacation to the beach. The slope or bluff in the state park does not currently meet the strict state standards, so D.J. Scheffler & Nye, along with the prime contractor, were brought in to stabilize the hillside, as well as build a concrete boardwalk. "This is a pretty unique job where we are building soldier piles to support the above roadway, as well as retaining wall piles with horizontal anchors and vertical piles. We are supporting the road and terrain above first so that the other trades can get in and begin their work on renovating the buildings and property," says Scheffler. "We are drilling these soldier piles around 50 to 55 feet deep and then continuing to stabilize the slope as we work our way down. Every time we place a pile, it is like building a wall that will prevent potential future landslides."

D.J. Scheffler & Nye started the job at the beginning of January and is scheduled to be on-site for the next six months. Before their work is complete, Scheffler will go through around 3,000 lbs. of rebar and 3,500 yards of concrete that will all go into the hundreds of soldier piles that will be drilled along the 10-acre work area that stretches around a quarter mile in length. "Concrete and rebar can account for as much as two-thirds of the cost on many of our projects, and we go through around 4 million pounds of rebar and another 4 million cubic yards of concrete each year," says Scheffler. "Those are big numbers, and it is actually more than many large concrete contractors utilize each year. We are always finding ways to reduce that amount, even if it means more drilling so that we can save our stakeholders money on those costly materials."

Scheffler points out that he regularly uses his own drilling method that he developed from strategies that have been successfully utilized in Europe for

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many years. "Instead of the CIDH (cast in drilled holes) method that presents water issues and requires the shafts to be kept open with hydrostatic pressure, we use the CFA (continuous flight auger) method where we take the auger and drill to the bottom of the pile elevation and pump concrete into the hole as we are pulling the auger out of the ground," says Scheffler. "We then push the rebar through the concrete that has been manipulated with chemicals to remain fluid. This can all be done manually or with a computer that allows for close to perfect accuracy."

As if drilling hundreds of soldier piles, pouring concrete and then pushing rebar into holes in the ground is not enough, Scheffler is also faced with the challenge of getting his drilling machines and support equipment up on to the bluff and behind the beach dwellings on the park project so they can do their work. "It is very narrow and tight on this and many of the projects that we perform, says Scheffler. "Access is an issue on almost all of our jobs, so to mitigate this challenge, we use one or several of our cranes to lift the equipment up and over the obstacle and then in to place on the hillside where we can either bench in an operating area or use one of our hillside machines that I developed and manufactured several years ago."

Scheffler purchased a Tadano-Mantis GTC-600 66-ton rough terrain crane from Coastline Equipment Crane Division in Santa Ana specifically for this project. "We had built up enough revenue

to purchase the Tadano-Mantis crane, and we went with the Tadano-Mantis for its crawler tracks and tremendous reach capacity," says Scheffler. "We are working right on the edge of the sand on the ocean, and you never know from one week to the next when you are going to need a track machine. We have several rubber tire RT cranes, but nothing works like tracks do in these wet, sandy and muddy environments. The Tadano-Mantis GTC-600 is also known for its duty cycle capabilities, which we also plan to take full advantage of in the future." Scheffler explains that it takes some special skills to work around the tide and accurately pick your windows of opportunity and having the right support equipment makes all the difference. "Gary Bach at Coastline Equipment (Crane Division) has been my go-to guy for cranes and other equipment going back 30-plus years. I bought my first crane through him, which was a Grove 18-ton stiff neck without a swing cab, and I purchased around a dozen more from Gary over the years," says Scheffler. "He is a good friend and a terrific resource for our company, and I trust him and Coastline Equipment (Crane Division) for my crane needs."

This isn't the first time that Dale Scheffler has dealt with Coastline Equipment. "I had my first experience with Coastline Equipment when they first started selling Trail King lowboy trailers years ago. I also rented a good amount of heavy construction

equipment from them over the years, and they have always been extremely professional and treated me right," says Scheffler. Scheffler currently has a sizable



inventory of cranes, excavators, skid steers, dozers, and drilling rigs. Their fleet of five cranes are all in the 40 to 50-ton range, and Scheffler's drilling rigs range from their compact Davey Kent 525's (3.5 ft. wide) for limited access areas, to their massive Soilmec 930 rigs, one of the largest of its kind in the United States. "There are many different disciplines in the drilling industry, and our machines are equipped to perform anywhere from a 4-inch to a 100-foot diameter shaft and down to depths beyond 100 feet," says Scheffler.

Most of the work that Scheffler does is private, and they can quite often be found working on multimillion-dollar mansions in areas like Malibu and Beverly Hills, Del Mar and Newport Beach. "We have 20 to 25 jobs going at any given time, and a \$350,000 to \$500,000 job at beachfront homes is fairly typical for our company," says Scheffler. "We also do work for underground contractors

where we construct access and receiving shafts 60 to 80 feet deep with a secant pile wall design." Scheffler says that one of the largest drills he ever did was on the Santa Maria River at Vandenberg Air Force Base where he drilled two 10-foot diameter piles, 192 feet deep without any casings. "Back in the day, all of the support came from water and fluid where they are now using pipe casings," says Scheffler. "I think we poured 500 yards of concrete in one hole alone that day." Another interesting job for Scheffler was when he designed and built all of the foundation work for the Legacy Skywalk project at the Grand Canyon. "We have been on so many fun and interesting project over the years and that is one of the things that keep this job interesting and why we will continue

to hire and train young, ambitious designers and engineers to keep the ball rolling into the future."

Times have not always been great for Dale Scheffler and his company, but he has always seemed to find a way to make it work. "We survived the Great Recession without too many issues, but a few years later, we took on a few projects with difficult contractors that made it really hard to make any money. Sometimes all it takes is one or two bad jobs to get you off track," says Scheffler. "We rebounded and went through one more name change in 2016 to D.J. Scheffler & Nye, Inc., and we are now back to the numbers we saw back in 2007. We are actually in a better position than ever before, and things are really booming right now. As more contractors begin to attempt to do our type of specialty drilling work, we have found ourselves taking on more conventional

concrete work recently, and that has also proved to be a good and prosperous decision."

D.J. Scheffler & Nye, Inc. is a drilling contractor with more than 35 years experience in foundation, environmental and geotechnical drilling. The company holds a contractor's and/or a specialty license in California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Hawaii, and Washington. They also offer services in California, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, and Colorado via other Scheffler companies. With a completion rate of over 150 projects per year in both the public and private sectors, D.J. Scheffler & Nye can design and build jobs involving deep foundations, micropiles, underpinning, earth shoring, tiebacks, and rock anchors, retaining walls and slope repair. For more information on D.J. Scheffler & Nye, Inc., please visit their website at www.djscheffler.com or call their Pomona offices at (909) 595-2924. **CC**

Background: Tadano-Mantis GTC-600 crawler crane lifting support equipment and other materials on project in Newport Beach.

