I Austria nearly turned into a busman’s holiday when he found himself on a golf course.

I’ve just had a holiday with friends at (sch)l in the Austrian Alps and, after three hard days mountain walking, we decided to have an easy day in the car. We had just survived some 25 hairpin bends descending from the Silvertta Lake, close to the Swiss border, when to our surprise just around the last bend we came upon Hochmontafon Golf Club on the outskirts of the small town of Partenen.

We just had to stop because the location was quite spectacular. We were given a warm welcome by the club management, and learned that the club was owned by four local men and was just coming to the end of its second season. The 9 hole fairly short (3 par fours and 6 par threes) but very interesting course is at 1115 metres, and is surrounded by mountains reaching 2400 metres above sea level. The land for the course, became available when the previous owner, a farmer, passed away leaving the land intestate. The local mayor was sympathetic to the idea of a golf course and the project was launched.

We were shown around the course by a proud Herbert Berger, one of the co-owners, and experienced some breathtaking outlooks when standing on the tees. Major hazards, apart from some outstanding rock formations, are cows who roam freely. Although the greens were small they were in very good condition, considering they spend five months under deep snow each year; the course is quite spectacular. We were given a warm welcome by the club management, and learned that the club was owned by four local men and was just coming to the end of its second season. The 9 hole fairly short (3 par fours and 6 par threes) but very interesting course is at 1115 metres, and is surrounded by mountains reaching 2400 metres above sea level. The land for the course, became available when the previous owner, a farmer, passed away leaving the land intestate. The local mayor was sympathetic to the idea of a golf course and the project was launched.

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A programme was started to empty the problem bunkers and provide a firm base by putting down a two to four inch layer of broken stone and laying upturned turf on top of the stone before refilling with sand. I wanted a sand which would hold some moisture and would be firm underfoot and in which the ball would not plug. The grain structure of a good bunker sand must be sharp and it must contain a good proportion of medium size grains. I was given a sample of HMC’s ProSport Bunker Sand from the Leighton Buzzard quarry. We did a trial on a range bunker to compare it with what we were using and it was just what I had been looking for. It performed better than anything I had seen previously and that it was also very similar in colour.

There are 137 bunkers on the Oxfordshire course, some of them very big indeed. One is called 'Hell's Half Acre' and another is over 1½ acres in area and has seven grass islands. Bunkers should be designed to penalise the player not the greenkeeper.”

I“There will be no complaints about the course, especially the bunkers,” says David Gower, “We have already renovated over half of the bunkers, and that includes all those which had to be due out to put in a firm base. There are about 45 still to be sorted out and they will be done over the winter. It will take about another 300 tonnes of ProSport bunker sand from Leighton Buzzard and that should complete the programme.”

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