Landmark named top resort developer

By Peter Blais

While financially it may be in shambles, Landmark Land Co.'s reputation as a premier golf resort developer remains very much intact.

The La Quinta, Calif.-based firm received better than a quarter of the votes for best resort developer in the Golf Course News third annual survey of course architects.

Landmark's vote total was more than twice that of any of its three nearest competitors — Marriott Corp., Woodbine Development Inc. and Arvida Corp.

"A resort golf course should have a sense of integrity," said architect William Newcomb, who did much of the design work at Boyne Highlands and Boyne Mountain near his Ann Arbor, Mich., home.

"You want to see the golf course, not homes and hotel rooms. I get the sense that Landmark strives for that sense of golf course integrity. I'm looking at it as an architect. The company's financial condition has nothing to do with that."

Landmark's holdings include some of the most prestigious courses in the country — Kiawah Island near Charleston, S.C.; Palm Beach Polo & Country Club in West Palm Beach, Fla.; Belle Terre Country Club between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, La.; and Oak Tree Golf Club and Oak Tree Country Club in Edmond, Okla.

Its California properties are Carmel Valley Ranch near Carmel and the Palm Springs area resorts La Quinta Hotel Golf & Tennis Resort, PGA West and Mission Hills.

Upscale public courses gain popularity

By Peter Blais

Use to be that if you wanted the valet bag drop-off, preferred tee time, meticulously maintained course and employees who knew you by name, you had to shell out thousands of dollars to join a private country club.

Not anymore. Upscale daily-deal courses with all the amenities of a private club are becoming the rage as developers scurry to fill a market niche many feel has long been under-served.

Golf Foundation. "People are willing to pay extra for a round at high-quality courses with that private country club look."

From 1987 to 1990, the number of private U.S. courses fell 1 percent (from 5,289 to 5,222) while daily-fee courses jumped 8 percent (from 6,025 to 6,497), according to NGF figures.

The cost of private clubs has become almost penal," Collins said. "The rich will always be able to afford them. But for marginal people, like me, paying $4,000 a year in dues and playing a hundred of times can work out to

NGF report tells the score

Fee increases reported at all private facilities/1985-90

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fee Type</th>
<th>1985</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>Increase</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Playing fees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiation</td>
<td>$4,734</td>
<td>$7,985</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual dues</td>
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<td>Cart fees</td>
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<td>$30.08</td>
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<td>Cart fees (per person)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-hole</td>
<td>$5.64</td>
<td>$7.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>18-hole</td>
<td>$7.84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consumer Price Index</td>
<td>109.2</td>
<td>134.6</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: NGF

Importance of core golfers noted

JUPITER, Fla. — Under scoring the importance of America's 12 million core golfers, a special report by the National Golf Foundation noted that, although they make up only 40 percent of the total U.S. golf population, they account for nearly 90 percent of all rounds played.

A core golfer is defined as one at least 18 years old and playing eight or more rounds per year. Nearly half of all core golfers purchase at least one golf club a year, compared to 17.2 percent for occasional golfers.

Among all player segments, the average annual expenditure on golf clubs is $198.65.

Among other findings:

• While the nation experienced a 23.3-percent growth in Consumer Price Index from 1985 to 1990, the average cost of an 18-hole round of golf at a public facility on a weekday rose 42.3 percent over the same period — from $10.36 to $14.75.

• 18-hole green fees at today's newer public courses opened for play since 1985 are running 40-45 percent higher than their older counterparts.