**Domestic golfers make Colombian market viable**

By Mark Leslie

BOGOTA, Colombia — "I think Colombia now is like the U.S. was in the early 1960s when we just discovered golf and found that people could afford it," said American golf course construction consultant Jerry Pierman.

Pierman, former president of the Golf Course Builders Association of America, is working with Jack Nicklaus and his Golden Bear International golf course design company on a project in Bucaramanga. Other foreign course designers are also busy here as this country awakens to the world of golf and its attraction to tourists.

Not only are middle-class Colombians discovering the game of golf, but so are the operators of its resorts, which draw tourists from Europe and Canada to this country where temperatures are inviting year-round.

"It’s ideal," golf course architect Gary Linn said of Colombia. "It’s Hawaiian. It’s California at its best. Mountainous, but with palm trees, thatched roofs... a special place."

The mountains here are cool and inviting while the oceanfront is beautiful. American course architect Jeff Myers, who is remodeling Club Compestra of Medellin’s nine-hole city course on the Llano, said: "Colombia now is like the U.S. was in the early 1960s when we just discovered golf and found that people could afford it," said American golf course construction consultant Jerry Pierman.

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Marsh gains U.S. foothold with HNTB

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Golf course designer Graham Marsh, who has long been active in Asia-Pacific, has formed an association with the golf course architect group of HNTB Corporation to offer design services in North and South America.

Graham Marsh Golf Design/HNTB will provide full-service design of upscale golf courses, as well as related developments — residential communities, resorts, hotels, retail and entertainment facilities.

The association’s first project is in Independence, Minn., for Burnet Realty. Graham Marsh Golf Design/HNTB is master planning a 600-acre development to include 60 to 85 residential lots, and 18-hole, high-end daily fee course, a learning center, equestrian facilities and trails, and a 15-hole, high-end daily fee course, a learning center, equestrian facilities and trails.

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