

BRIEFS



SASSER FORMS GDC, PROJECT MANAGEMENT CONSULTANCY

TEQUESTA, Fla.— Tom Sasser has formed Golf Development Consultants (GDC). The company will specialize in pre-development project management and technical service support for golf course construction. "Many developers begin projects without a full understanding of the methodology and costs associated with the development of a golf course," said Sasser, who has more than two decades of experience in land planning and golf course construction. Sasser retired from the Golden Bear organization after 18 years, and most recently served as president of Paragon Construction. Sasser can be reached by calling 561-748-9052.

CALDWELL JOINS OLSEN TEAM

ANAHEIM, Calif.— Jerry Caldwell, a construction management veteran with more than 30 years experience in hospitality and golf course development, has joined R.D. Olson Construction as senior project manager. Caldwell, who resides in Phoenix, Ariz., served as project manager of hotel development for La Quinta Inns & Suites before joining the R.D. Olson Construction team.

NIEBUR PROMOTES MCGRAW

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo.— Niebur Golf, Inc. has promoted Frank McGraw to the position of general superintendent. He will be responsible for the field operations on multiple projects. Niebur Golf provides construction services across the nation. Its current clients include projects ranging from Salt Lake City, Utah, to Southport, N.C.



BAY HARBOR NINE EXPECTS COMPANY IN '97
Bay Harbor Golf Club in Petoskey, Mich., is one of 10 projects Arthur Hills and Associates will open for play during 1997. Nine holes opened at Bay Harbor during '96, but Hills will open another 18 this year. For a rundown of Hills projects, see story page 45.

NEW FRONTIERS

Domestic golfers make Colombian market viable

By MARK LESLIE

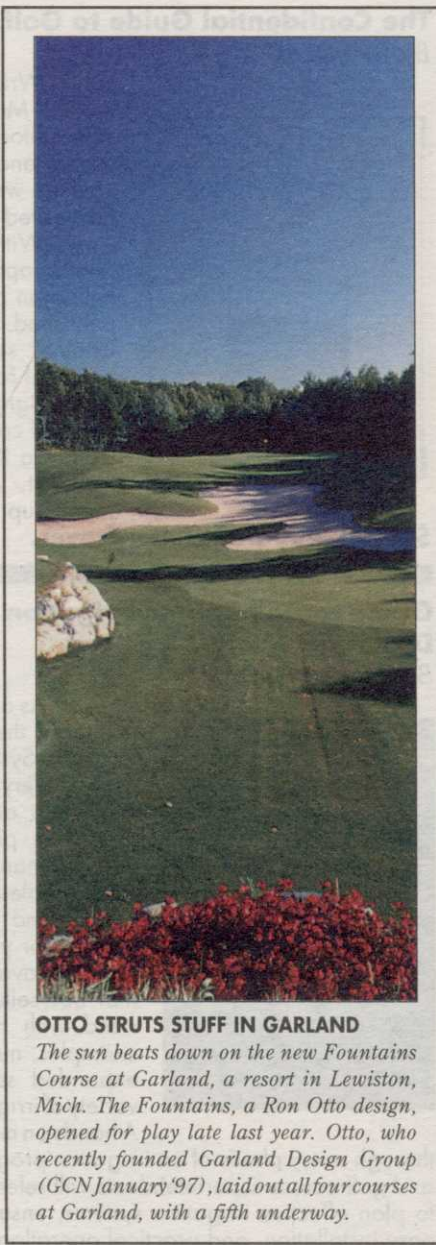
BOGOTA, Colombia — "I think Colombia now is like the U.S. was in the early 1960s when we just discovered golf and found that people could afford it," said American golf course construction consultant Jerry Pierman.

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

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OTTO STRUTS STUFF IN GARLAND

The sun beats down on the new Fountains Course at Garland, a resort in Lewiston, Mich. The Fountains, a Ron Otto design, opened for play late last year. Otto, who recently founded Garland Design Group (GCN January '97), laid out all four courses at Garland, with a fifth underway.

ASGCA Directors speak on design



The officers of the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) sat down in February to speak with Golf Course News, for a second time following a November visit, on issues affecting golf course design and maintenance. Taking part were ASGCA President Denis Griffiths, Vice President Alice Dye, Secretary Bob Lohmann and Treasurer John LaFoy. Here are excerpts from that conversation.

Golf Course News: Many courses are billing themselves as "playable for the high-handicapper yet challenging to the better golfer." Does this inhibit your design style, and are we making cookie cutter courses?

Alice Dye: I don't think so at all. By changing the angle of your tees, and a few things like that, you can make golf courses that are very challenging for back-tee players and still very playable and manageable for everyday players.

Let's take one of the hardest golf courses in the world — PGA West [a Pete and Alice Dye design]. From their tees, the ladies play in less time than the men because it is very manageable for them. We gave them a good angle. There may not be an opening to the pin, but there is one to the green, and there are no forced carries except on par-3s... Because of the angle of the back tee, low-handicappers are shooting over the lake, through the fairway, into a bunker, whereas the angle

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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 de-

sign 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-

Graham Marsh (2nd from left) surveys a Filipino site with HNTB's Steve Bauer (left) and a bearded Terry Morgan, representing developer Fil-Estate Group.

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Colombian market

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site 5,000 feet above sea level, said it lives up to the meaning of Medellin: "city of eternal spring." The temperatures hover around 78 degrees Fahrenheit every day and 60 degrees at night.

Interest rates soaring above 30 percent here are putting a number of projects on hold. But others have pushed through the challenges.

Many Americans are busy designing courses here on properties varying from oceanfront to mountainous: Nicklaus; Myers of Lake Worth, Fla.; Robert Trent Jones II International (RTJ II) of Palo

Alto, Calif.; and Scott Miller of Scottsdale, Ariz.

• Nicklaus' project, Ruitoque Golf and Country Club, is a housing development and weekend retreat in Bucaramanga, with tennis and swimming as well as golf. "It's 2,400 feet high and gorgeous," Pierman said. "Three or four holes are as scenic as any in the world."

Nine holes were playable last fall and the full 18 were scheduled to open early this year.

• In the mountains, an hour's drive outside Bogota, Miller has designed Payande Golf Club — a facility planning an inaugural outing in March.

• Linn, with RTJ II, is working on Mesa

de Yeguas golf course outside Bogota, and the company has been hired for two other projects — one in Bogota and another in Cartagena.

Mesa de Yeguas, meaning Land of the Wild Horses, is about to partially open.

• Myers has one huge project at Cartagena on the coast on hold waiting for the country's economy to stabilize, has just finished remodeling six holes at Club Compestre de Cali, an old Stanley Thompson-designed track in Cali. He has also completed a master plan for renovation of Club Farallones in Cali, and is planning another new course in Cartagena called Cartes di Indes.

Myers is gaining recognition in this

country following the opening of his Pena Lisa in Girardot in November 1995. At that time, he said, "there was a lot of activity." But when political troubles struck President Ernesto Sampar last spring the monetary exchange rate rocketed from 850-1,000 pesos to the dollar to around 1,500 pesos to the dollar. And Sampar recently imposed new taxes on imports, another detriment to new development.

The developers of Cartes di Indes in Cartagena have a plan drawn by touring professional Seve Ballesteros, but it did not include a housing component that is now part of the project. Myers has been called in to design that project.

"Cartegena," he said, "is to Colombia as Florida is to the U.S. The people who live in Bogota and Cali and Medellin are at about 4,000 to 9,000 feet [above sea level], where it's relatively cool. So they go here, where it is warm and a family holiday area."

Meanwhile, Myers is excited about the prospects of the \$US60 million-US\$70 million oceanfront project in Cartagena called El Faro (The Light), for a lighthouse on the property. The developer, Promotora El Faro de Cartagena, has 600 acres, including a mile of oceanfront. The firm is negotiating with a major hotel chain and hopes to include a casino component in the project as well as time-sharing and regular housing.

Bilkey Lineas Design of West Palm Beach, Florida, is the hotel and master plan architect.

RTJ II's Mesa de Yeguas, developed by Ceullar Serrano Gomez Ltd., has been almost a five-year process, but is about to open the nine-hole par-3 course that surrounds its extensive practice range. The earthwork is complete on the 18-hole championship course.

At the end of January the first six holes had been planted. Earthwork had also been completed on 16 holes of the par-72, 7,110-yard regulation course, and three of the holes had been rough-shaped.

"The struggle [in completing construction] has primarily been material supplies — sand and gravel," Linn said, "as well as construction and finish equipment."

An old, established company which has built office buildings and high-rise condominium projects in Bogota, Ceullar Serrano Gomez Ltd. has signed RTJ II to design two other courses, but both are on hold, Linn said.

Sontanar del Rio CC will sit on the north side of Bogota, a mile from el Rincon, which was designed by Robert Trent Jones Sr. in the 1960s. It has been approved. "Hopefully we'll begin work on it in the next year," Linn said, "but that is subject to the investment climate in the country."

The other project, a destination resort facility of major dimensions, is planned for an island outside Cartagena. It would include five hotels and two golf courses. The delay here, Linn said, is negotiations with the government.

Club Payande, an hour northwest of Bogota along the banks of the Rio Tobia and at 4,000 feet, is developed by Promotora Payande S.A., a group of golfers who belong to Country Club of Bogota and El Rincon and St. Andres country clubs. The private, 18-hole, 7,038-yard course opened three holes a year ago.

Members now don't have to travel to Miami or Puerto Rico to play golf during the rainy seasons of January-February and September-October, Miller said.

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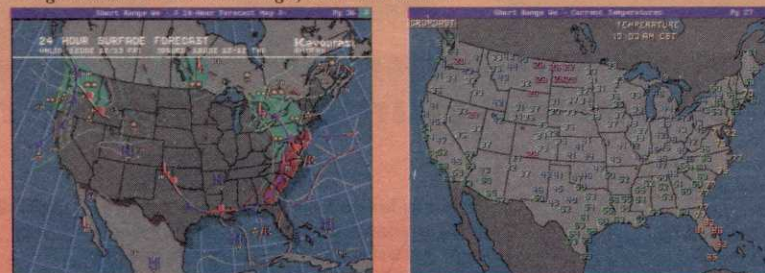
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