Fazio ringing Philadelphia’s bell

NORTH COVENTRY, Pa. — Golf course architect Tom Fazio is quickly making his mark on the land of Chester County outside Philadelphia.

Fazio has been chosen to transform the 172-acre Gruber estate in northern Chester County into a private, 18-hole facility called Bellewood. Bellewood will be a 6,877-yard, par-72 course straddling Route 724 just south of the Schuylkill River. A 16,000-square-foot mansion built in 1864 will serve as the clubhouse. An additional 6,000-square-foot mansion will be used for overnight accommodations and meetings. When it opens, possibly sometime in 1999, Bellewood will be the second course in Chester County designed by Fazio. The first is Hartefeld National in New Garden. Hartefeld National will host the Senior PGA Tour’s Bell Atlantic Classic later this spring.

As is often the case, Fazio will be working with another classic piece of property, with rolling terrain and thousands of pink and white dogwood trees. The Gruber Estate, once owned by the Edward L. Gruber family which made its fortune manufacturing T-shirts and undergarments, had a reputation for finely maintained grounds. More than 70 acres of the site were maintained and will be the setting for eight holes.

Fazio’s design features five holes north of Route 724 and the remaining 13 holes to the south. Plans call for a tunnel to be built under the roadway to provide better access. The site will feature two main water hazards, an existing pond and an artificial lake. There will also be a driving range, practice area.

Earth Enterprises of Kimberton, Pa., is handling the construction. Earth Enterprises Tom Drauschak has said he hopes construction will start this spring.

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