By BOB SPIWAK

Running Y Ranch, a resort within a working cattle ranch in south-central Oregon, will celebrate the official grand opening of its golf course on Aug. 26, with designer Arnold Palmer playing an inaugural round.

Built by John Thronson of Jen-Weld Corp., the course wanders through picturesque Payne Canyon, playing from 4,886 to 7,165 yards. Water comes into play on five holes and more than 30 bunkers are strategically placed, eight of them surrounding the 9th green.

Traversing an open meadow, with views of Klamath Lake and the Crater Lake Range, the front nine hosts the signature 5th hole, a short par-3 at 4,200-foot elevation and dominated by water on the right. It measures 140 yards form the middle tees.

The back nine is a nature walk, with a mixture of juniper, pine and other trees, frequently occupied by bald eagles and ospreys, with deer wandering beneath.

Wildflowers are an important part of the design, adding color to the fescue roughs, bluegrass-ryegrass fairways and bentgrass greens.

According to Thronson, it took 10 months over two seasons to build the course, despite abnormally difficult mud and rock conditions.

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Thronson designs in hands-on way

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