

BRIEFS



DOSCHER JOINS NORTHEAST GOLF

FAIR HAVEN, N.J. — Chris Doscher, a landscape architecture graduate from the University of Massachusetts, has joined the firm of The Northeast Golf Co. At UMass, he received the Honor Award for the American Society of Landscape Architects for Outstanding Achievement in Design. As a design associate he will assist design development and construction documentation for new golf course and renovation projects.



Chris Doscher

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VAIL PLANS BEAVER CREEK COURSE

VAIL, Colo. — Vail Resorts, Inc. has announced plans to invest approximately \$59 million for the upcoming winter season in resort improvements for its Vail, Breckenridge, Keystone and Beaver Creek mountain resorts. Included are a new golf course and high-speed four passenger chairlift at Beaver Creek. Approximately \$9 million is planned to be invested at the Beaver Creek resort. Preliminary planning for the golf course development near Beaver Creek is awaiting local government approval.

PRIMM VALLEY OPENS 2ND FAZIO

NEVADA — Primm Valley Golf Club, home of the Tom Fazio-designed Lakes Course, has opened its Desert Course off Interstate 15, four miles south of Primadonna Casino Resorts' properties at the Southern Nevada/California border.

In contrast to the lush landscaping and water features of the Lakes Course, Fazio created a more challenging playing option at the arid Desert Course, with narrower fairways melding into natural desert landscape with many varieties of cacti and palm.

ASGCA DONATES TO 3 PROJECTS

CHICAGO — As part of its second annual President's Grant Program, the American Society of Golf Course Architects Foundation has presented grants to the Indiana Golf Foundation (IGF), Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and Tufts Archives. IGF will use its grant to help launch its new golf camp for at-risk children. The GCSAA grant is for its "Investing in the Beauty of Golf Campaign." Tufts Archives in Pinehurst, N.C., houses many drawings and works from Donald Ross and others.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

Colorado golf boom keeps on ticking

By ALLEN BEST

In 1992 Fred Green wanted to build a membership-driven golf course about 15 miles west of Vail, Colo., the nation's largest ski area. As a hedge, he drafted plans to first excavate the rich gravel deposits.

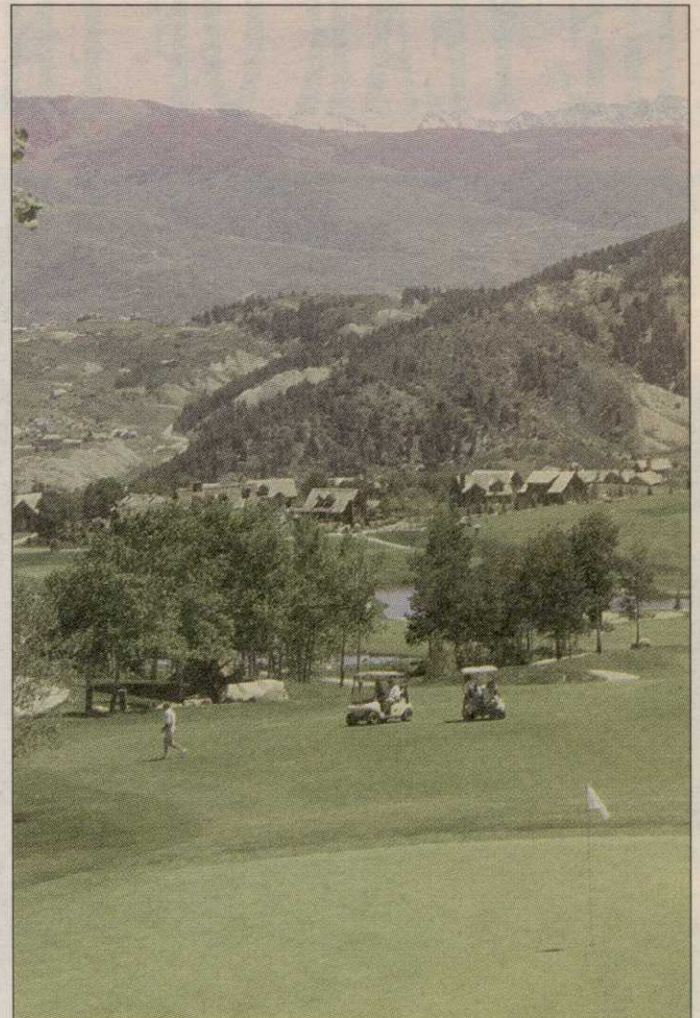
Green started selling memberships at \$50,000, quickly upped it to \$80,000 and, soon, greens overlaid the gravel. The membership roster is full at 250, with invitation-only membership fees now believed to cost well in excess of \$100,000. Presence of a railroad track bisecting the course never hampered sales. There is no associated housing nor hotel.

That course, Eagle Springs, is among the most startling success stories in a valley exploding with golf courses. Five courses were built in the first 30 years after the Vail Ski Area opened in 1962. Five more (including a short course) have opened in just the last four years. But at least 10 others are planned, or double the number already built, in this valley of 30,000 people where it has snowed twice on the Fourth of July during the 1990s.

A parallel boom is occurring nearby in the 42-mile-long Roaring Fork Valley, home to the Aspen and Snowmass ski areas. The first two courses opened in the 1970s, and weren't followed until the Maroon Creek Club opened in 1994; memberships cost \$150,000. Today's 117 holes of golf in that valley could grow to 176 by the next millennium.

Summit County, another enclave of ski resorts along the Interstate 70 corridor, has three courses that will be supplemented by two and possibly more. Elevation there is 8,000 to 9,000 feet, frosty in all months save for July.

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Cordillera Resort outside Vail.



The 17th hole at the Pete Dye-designed Whistling Straits outside Kohler, Wis.

Whistling Straits even stuns Dye

KOHLER, Wis. — "In my lifetime I've never seen anything like this. Anyplace. Period." Speaking "with some degree of modesty," architect Pete Dye was describing his Whistling Straits, a links-type course on the shores of Lake Michigan which opened for public play on July 7.

Stretching along two miles of Great Lakes shoreline, the 18-hole facility pays homage to the origins of golf by stressing that it is a walking course only and will have caddies. The PGA of America has already selected Whistling Straits as host site for the 1999 Club Pro Championship, a national title tournament.

Whistling Straits is the latest addition to the resort complex owned by Kohler Co. and centered in the Village of Kohler that already includes Dye's Blackwolf Run, and the AAA Five Diamond resort

hotel The American Club. Blackwolf Run hosted the U.S. Women's Open Championship in July.

Offering a view of the Great Lake from each of its 18 holes, Whistling Straits has fescue fairways and massive sand bunkers. It weaves 14 holes in nearly uninterrupted sequence along the two miles of lakefront. Eight holes hug the shoreline where the Straits Course plays from just above beach level, then rises nearly 80 feet to bluffs and elevated berms that provide panoramic views of the watery horizon.

The par-72 Straits Course plays to 7,288 yards from the championship tees. Each hole has five tee placements. Occupying a 560-acre site, Whistling Straits will eventually offer two 18-hole courses. Joining

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Player: Keeping busy in Asia & busier in U.S.

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — After scaling back his group office in Singapore as a result of the economic downturn, Gary Player remains bullish on Asia as well as the growth of the public golf market around the world. GCN recently caught up with the living legend to discuss the Asian situation and the current project in his own backyard.



Gary Player

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Golf Course News: Now that you've scaled back the group office in Singapore, where do you see your position in the Asian market?

Gary Player: "We're still very positive about Singapore. It's a very important part of our presence in Asia. As things come back to normal there's no doubt that we'll return in full force. I continue to make my visits and I refuse to disregard the market just because they're having a few problems. As far as the market stands now, we still have projects going and we're optimistic. But that's life, isn't it, trials and errors."

GCN: How will the Asian golf market get back on its feet?

GP: I think public golf for every market, not just Asia, is going to be key. A man like Tiger Woods has had a great influence. It's so terribly important that a young man like Tiger, who's in such an important role, visit Asia as well as South Africa and other re-

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BAKERSFIELD, Calif. — Ground has been broken here on The Links at RiverLakes Ranch, an 18-hole course designed by Santa Rosa-based Golfplan. Working with a parcel featuring mature almond orchards and nine lakes, Golfplan has created a varied collection of golf holes as the daily-fee course which is scheduled to open in early 1999.

"We've laid out 18 very inter-

Golfplan gets started on Bakersfield 18

esting holes at RiverLakes — very diverse, yet there is continuity in the form of the orchard and a Scottish design style," said Rick Elliott, senior architect at Golfplan. "The lake feeling is also very strong. Water will be in play on half the holes. However, we've placed the lakes very strategically so the effect is visual, not

necessarily penal. We've addressed playability issues very closely here. Multiple tees will make RiverLakes enjoyable for the shorter hitters, while the back tees will give the accomplished player all he can handle."

The Links at RiverLakes Ranch is a joint venture between housing developer Fruitvale

Properties and Environmental Golf, a management, development and construction firm. Fruitvale has already developed 1,100 acres involving 2,200 housing units near the course.

Environmental Golf (EG) will construct the Golfplan design. EG has embarked on an ambitious landscaping program, trans-

planting many of the existing almond trees and introducing evergreens in the form of Redwoods and Canary Island pines.

"We've designed the course to serve as a drainage basin for the housing," said Golfplan principal Ron Fream. "The 18 holes sit below the residential lots, which provides homeowners fabulous views of the course while simultaneously providing golfers a subtle amphitheater feel."

Q&A: Player

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gions of the world.

GCN: Do you think there will be more affordable, sustainable, public projects popping up in Asia or a return to the high-end club?

GP: I think there's going to be room for both, just like everywhere else in the world. Public golf is important, driving ranges are important, golf academies, which we are very involved in, are very important. We have to educate people how to play the public courses or to fill the vacuums in country clubs.

GNC: Where do you see your academy business doing its best work?

GP: Our best is in Singapore. It's doing extremely well.

GNC: What markets are doing well?

GP: The South African market is booming. We're doing courses here, we have [Ron] Fream, [Tom] Weiskopf and [Jack] Nicklaus doing courses here. It's very buoyant at the moment.

GCN: What has caused this boom?

GP: The terrible disease of Apartheid is gone now and we have one of the true democracies in the world. Now people who never traveled to South Africa, and who weren't investing in South Africa and who didn't have confidence in South Africa... the whole picture has changed. We have great leadership in a man like President Mandela, we have a very sporting country, and of course, South Africa has the best climate in the world.

GCN: What do you have planned in South Africa?

GP: We're planning quite a few academies. We're also planning 36 holes right here on my ranch in Johannesburg. We're going to have a spa, hotel, golf academy and housing development.

GCN: Any other hot markets?

GP: We have four in planning in the Philippines, and in Indonesia we are about to open in Bintan in two or three months. We have one in planning in Malaysia, one in Singapore, and two under construction in Japan.

GCN: Then you haven't ground to a halt in Asia?

GP: Well, it's put a slight damper on our business, but we're looking at the up side. It's all part of a cycle, isn't it?

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