

**B**AKERSFIELD, 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.

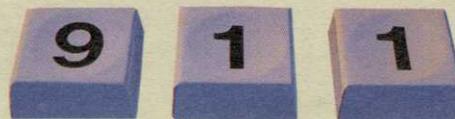
**GCN:** Any other hot markets?

**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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