Paragon Construction International, Inc., has been retained to design 18 holes here at the Sparrebosch CliffTop Estate and Country Club, a US$100 million residential resort development situated on spectacular headlands overlooking the Indian Ocean. Groundbreaking is scheduled for March 1 and the course will be the southernmost on the African continent when it opens with a planned New Year's Eve 1999 celebration. This will provide Golfplan a unique backdrop, as the Santa Rosa, California-based firm also designed the continent's northernmost course: the 27-hole Golf de Tabarka Resort in the Tunisian port city of Tabarka.

"When we opened Tabarka in 1992, people called it the Cypress Point of the Mediterranean," said Ron Fream, Golfplan founder and principal. "So it's fitting that our first South African project will be Sparrebosch, because the site couldn't be more suggestive of Pebble Beach."

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SOUTH AFRICAN PROPERTY AN EYE-LIFTER FOR FREEM

NYSNA, South Africa — Working a site that is "nearly too good to be true," Golfplan has been retained to design 18 holes here at the Sparrebosch CliffTop Estate and Country Club, a US$100 million residential resort development situated on spectacular headlands overlooking the Indian Ocean. Groundbreaking is scheduled for March 1 and the course will be the southernmost on the African continent when it opens with a planned New Year's Eve 1999 celebration. This will provide Golfplan a unique backdrop, as the Santa Rosa, California-based firm also designed the continent's northernmost course: the 27-hole Golf de Tabarka Resort in the Tunisian port city of Tabarka.

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been together ever since.
GCN: What had you been doing at the time?
DP: I had worked at Disneyland summers during college and had gone back to work there after I graduated. The funny thing is that the day before he called I rejected an offer to go into Disney's management-training program. I was thinking that I really wanted to stick it out and try to get into this golf course architecture thing. And sure enough, Bob calls me the next afternoon. That's karma or kismet or one of those things.
GCN: What was the first project you worked on with Bob?
DP: The first from the beginning was Santa Clara Golf & Tennis Club. Within a month of doing that, we were commissioned to do La Purisima. From there it just blossomed through the 1980s.
GCN: What was the major thing you've learned from Bob?
DP: Honesty and integrity. He's a very unpretentious guy. He'll go out of his way to help you and never burn bridges... As designers, we all have these really cool ideas about things we really want to do. Sometimes we can't do them and that gets frustrating. But he taught us that the project is the most important thing, not your personal monument.
GCN: Most of your projects have been in the Western United States. Are you looking to expand to other regions?
DP: We have made inroads on the East Coast. We have one project under contract and hope to have a second within 30 days. Our goal is to definitely work throughout the country. As designers, it appeals to us to work with different environmental conditions, with different landscapes, and different market conditions. Upscale, daily-fee golfers are a little different in Ohio than they are in California.
We've never pursued international work very hard. But when it has come our way, it's been fun. We did a couple projects in Canada. We did a major renovation to a course south of Vancouver called Richmond Country Club. We did a renovation near Whistler called Squamish Valley Country Club. We built a course between those two called Furry Creek. In the movie Happy Gilmore, the scene where Adam Sandler fights with Bob Barker was filmed at Furry Creek. ... We've done several courses in Malaysia, one in Guam and a lot of planning work in Japan and Korea.
GCN: From a design standpoint, is there anything that you consistently see in a Damian Pascuzzo project?
DP: I hope not. Our clients vary so much that I really try to understand who their market is, what their development objectives are, and then design accordingly. On a very elementary level, Bob has ingrained in me a sensitivity toward maintenance and playability for all levels of golfers. But we try to tailor everything toward the specific client.
We have a client who has 135 acres on a steep site. But there are 2 million golfers within 10 miles. We're going into the project knowing the course will never make the cover of Golf Digest, but we're going to build a really fun course that's going to make these guys a lot of money. We're not building a monument. We're looking at it mostly from a business perspective. There's a very specific market niche there that we're trying to fill, and our job is to deliver that product for our client.
Occasionally, you get a project like La Purisima, where the client gives you 300 wonderful acres and says 'Find the best 18...
Q&A: Pascuzzo

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holes possible.' That's a very different game.

DP: The most frustrating thing is that the permitting process is so difficult, so time-consuming and so financially intensive that only the big boys can play. It's becoming more and more difficult for the smaller developers to get projects off the ground because their pockets just aren't deep enough. And that's bad for everybody.

GCN: How is the difficulty of environmental permitting affecting the industry?

DP: The one really encouraging thing is the outreach to newcomers to the game. If we can find these 10-, 20- and 30-acre parcels in urban areas that we can convert into pitch-and-putts and practice ranges, that might well for the game. I hope we can see some get built; then we could be looking at 30 million golfers instead of the 22 or 24 million we're at today.

One is the quality of the sites we've given. The premium sites are rare these days. Consequently, there is a lot of earth moving, remediation, landslide fixes. And certainly the environmental scrutiny we come under raises costs. We are protecting things, real and imagined, more than we ever did before.

GCN: Do you have a favorite course of your own?

DP: I don't have one that I wouldn't like to go back and remodel. You always feel that. A year later you say, "Boy, if I could just go back I'd do this differently."

But the test for me is whether I could be happy playing the course every week as a member. I could play La Purisima every day of the year and not get tired of it. It's the overall experience. It's a very strong test, especially from the blue tees. The white tees don't beat your brains out too bad. It's 300 acres of rolling hills just north of Santa Barbara, a marvelous setting. There's a real good rhythm to the golf course, the holes are all a little different, and you're not hemmed in by anything, not even other fairways. The overall experience is very enjoyable. You're not distracted by condominums or freeways. It's a great opportunity to socialize with your friends and concentrate on your game.

GCN: You're regarded as one of the pioneers in the use of CADD systems for golf course architecture. Why is that?

DP: When I was coming out of college, we were just getting into the use of computers in landscape architecture. I used to pestер Bob to no end about getting into computer-aided design. We picked up our first system in 1987, right when the 386 hit the market. We had one of the earliest versions of AutoCADD and have been at it ever since. I know we were one of the first using it in golf course architecture because the ASGCA asked me to give talks on the use of computers in design back in 1986-87. Mike Hurdzan and Clyde Johnston also got involved.

Today so many of the young guys have grown up with computers and couldn't imagine life without them. I'd bet at least 20 have worked complete CADD systems into their practice.

GCN: Have the costs to build golf courses increased?

DP: Unfortunately, costs continue to rise. When I first started working for Bob, he built a course in Washington for $800,000. Now I can't even put in an irrigation system for that. It's unfortunate, but there are a number of factors that play into it. One is the quality of the sites we've given. The premium sites are rare these days. Consequently, there is a lot of earth moving, remediation, landslide fixes. And certainly the environmental scrutiny we come under raises costs. We are protecting things, real and imagined, more than we ever did before.

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