

Then, poinsettias; now golf as well

ENCINITAS, Calif. — Encinitas was a quiet little seaside community and the population of San Diego was one-third what it is today, when Cary Bickler dreamed of designing a golf course on the Ecke Flower Ranch. Now, golfers can play Encinitas Ranch Golf Course, which opened on the flower ranch on March 1.

"I lived on a country road across from the Ecke flower fields, a spectacular site for a golf course, where I would stand visualizing green, rolling fairways," Bickler said. "Then I would go to my office, and back to the reality of being a young designer starting a golf course design practice, hoping the phone would ring."

Time marched on. The flowers fields continued to grow and so did Bickler's golf course design practice. While the Southern California population multiplied and demand for real estate spiraled, the secluded agricultural fields remained hidden, high on a mesa, overlooking the Pacific Ocean and the La Costa Spa and Country Club below. Three years ago, Bickler opened his mail and found a Re-



Encinitas Ranch Golf Course's 430-yard 17th hole, looking back from the green. On the drive, golfers face a forced carry over a canyon.

quest for Proposal from the city of Encinitas for the design of an 18-hole course on the very property where he had stood dreaming 27 years earlier.

In honor of Encinitas' worldwide recognition for flower-growing, Bickler has designed the 11th, or "Flower Hole," at the entrance to the golf course. Golfers will be greeted by the colorful array of

flowers which local growers will display year-round as a proud symbol of the City's commerce.

"When the opportunity to design the course presented itself, I was elated," Bickler said. "My dream came rushing back to me, and the time had come. I knew the job was meant for me."

The Encinitas Ranch Golf Course is in

North San Diego County at the Leucadia Boulevard exit, on the east side of Interstate 5. It is just 15 minutes north of Torrey Pines Golf Course. It is located on the only remaining ocean-view property of its kind along the coastline of San Diego County.

Bickler's long acquaintance with the site and recognition of its natural elements directed his design in preserving the "coastal sea ranch theme." His goal was to give the appearance that hundreds of years of winds had shaped the mounding.

Bickler drew detailed plans, but to further emphasize his concept of a "timeless look," he also gave shapers his favorite black-and-white photos of windblown sand dunes. Natural features include red sandstone bluffs that accentuate the lay of the land, and native vegetation which weaves in and around the course. Windrows of mature eucalyptus and Torrey Pine trees border some of the fairways, as do the flower fields which will remain in production.

The course is situated on 18 acres, with two agricultural lakes that come into play on four holes. The 6,812-yard, par-72, daily-fee course has four sets of tees so golfers can select the distance according to their ability.



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Weed, Pete Dye team at Amelia Island Pt.

PONTE-VEDRA, Fla. — Bobby Weed was awarded design of a new nine holes and redesign of nine existing holes in conjunction with Pete Dye at Amelia Island Plantation to create a new 18-hole layout called The Ocean Links.

"Five holes will parallel the Atlantic Ocean, and golfers will be able to see, hear and almost feel the salt spray as they play," Weed said of the site. "It is going to be spectacular."

Weed and Dye will collaborate in the redesign of the existing nine holes, for-

merly The Ocean Side, which Dye originally created.

"We will take full advantage of the breathtaking ocean vistas in our design," Weed elaborated. "We are always aware of the environmental concerns and have worked diligently with the state and federal agencies to gain permission to recreate dunes and plant additional sea oats and other indigenous vegetation along the dunes."

The Ocean Links is slated to open in the fall.



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