New Golf Unlimited eyes German growth

ÖSTRINGEN-TIEFENBACH, Germany — Some of the golf industry's most experienced professionals in Germany have joined in a partnership designed to handle a golf project from concept to management.

Golf Unlimited is the brainchild of Managing Partner Christian Bohn, formerly a project manager with Paragon Construction and now the representative planning consent at Stifterhof. While each new project receives individually chosen team members, project managers, superintendents and shapers, etc., a more permanent team of core partners has been established to ensure that reputable and acclaimed professionals are involved at every stage of the development — be it a small-scale renovation or full-blown resort project, Bohn said.

Key members include Nicklaus Design, Weitz Golf International, J.L. Pfeiffer International Associates and Michael Redd Associates, all of whom are based in Florida, USA. Between them, they are responsible for some of the highest-quality and famous golf courses in the world, including The London Golf Club in England, Muirfield Village Golf Club and Kiawah Island in the United States, and the Hyatt Regency Resort in Abu Dhabi.

It is this recognizable quality that Bohn believes will bring success for Golf Unlimited. "We know that there is a need in

Retuming the Olde World to the Olde World

By MARK LESLIE

Doonbeg, County Clare, N. Ireland — Greg Norman is so enthralled with the property that he had been on site four times before ground was broken in December. His senior designer, Jason McCoy, had been here seven times to walk the land and route the 18-hole golf course for Shannon Development and Landmark International.

"Doonbeg is 100 times the site of the Ocean Course [in Kiawah Island, S.C.]," said McCoy, who worked on the Ocean Course with architect Pete Dye. "It has 1-1/2 miles on the ocean and the dunes are 100 feet versus 10 feet at Kiawah. It's an unbelievable links site."

Norman and McCoy have "routed, rerouted and rerouted it again," McCoy said. "Every time, we change a tee or green 20 feet. Every time, we find something even better. We might move just 25,000 square feet of dirt on this project. We will start cutting the fairways just as they are right now."

Norman and McCoy plan to keep Doonbeg "old Irish style — old hard and creeping fescues," McCoy said. "We will not Americanize it in any way."

Flann Quilligan is working on the project with Shannon Development, which has formed a joint venture with Landmark International. They hope to finish Doonbeg by mid-2000 and open it in 2001.

Fream-Dale Golfplan rolling round the globe

By ANDREW OVERBECK

SANTA ROSA, Calif. — Newly re-named Fream-Dale Golfplan based here is rolling into 2000 with two courses set to open and new projects on the books and in the works. The firm's two openings this year prove there are still fabulous sites available for golf development.

Bonari Kogen Golf Club in Numajiri, Japan, which sits in the hills northwest of Tokyo, is slated to open June 3. Aiming to bring the course into the market as the best in Japan, the project owner opted to let the course grow in for an entire year.

"The course was ready to open last May," said senior architect, David Dale. "They took a year to work on their maintenance practices and make sure their soil chemistry is balanced. As a result, it looks magnificent."

According to Dale, the most dramatic hole on the course is the par-5 3rd that runs along a canyon ridge and features views of the inactive Mt. Bandai volcano. "You can cut the corner off the tee," he said. "But it is a 260-yard drive to cross the canyon. It is a gutsy shot."

Also set to open in June is Sparrebosch Golf Resort in Kaysna, South Africa. Nine holes opened this December and Dale expects to have the remaining nine shaped and seeded by the end of January.

The course sits along the Indian Ocean, the estuaries of Kaysna and is adjacent to an indigenous forest.

As a result, it took nine months to get the regulatory approvals. All the work was worth it in the end, said Dale. "These are both sites that you'd give your two front teeth for."

Fream and Dale will also be busy in Southeast Asia in the coming months.

In Korea, the firm is working the Nine Bridges Golf Club on Cheju Island and Dale is doing the grading plans for another course at Yong Pyong Resort. Movement is also possible at Sun Chon Country Club in Kwang Ju, a course that the firm first looked at 2-1/2 years ago.

In Singapore, Fream and Dale will be renovating the Sentosa Golf Club in Serapong that Fream designed in the late 1970's. The course will be getting a full-scale facelift, according to Dale. "It has been in the ground for 20 years," he said. "And we will be reworking the course, flushing out the bunkers, etc. On a course that has mature vegetation it will make for real fun architecture."