

Sanford's Pointe West anchors 'neo-traditional' town

By JAY FINEGAN

VERO BEACH, Fla. — Golf architect John Sanford's latest design, The Links at Pointe West, not only provides a fine 18 holes for this Florida beach town, it's also the centerpiece of the largest master-planned community ever approved here in Indian River County.

The course occupies 200 acres of a total of 600 acres that make up what Sanford calls "a town within a town." But more on that later.

Sanford started here with a flat piece of property — an old orange grove. By the time he'd excavated 42 acres and moved 700,000 cubic yards of dirt, however, he had given the layout what he calls "some topography." The excavation created 16 separate lakes.

"It's the drainage basin for the entire community," Sanford said. "Every hole has some type of water feature, although playing the front two sets of tees generally takes the water out of play. The result is a course that is challenging for top players, but not overly demanding for the average player."

14 HOLES SINGLE-LOADED

The semi-private course, stretching to 7,010 yards, opened late last fall. Fourteen holes here are single-loaded, meaning the hole being played is generally the only one visible to the golfer.

The most distinguishing features, though, are the 350-foot-wide fairway corridors which create strategic options in terms of playing it safe or going for the heroic shot. "The actual fairways average 150 or 160 feet," Sanford said. "With that nice width, we could design the course so that players can pick their line of play."

The course also boasts 51 bunkers. "Bunkers are visible from the tee or fairway and dramatically shaped," said director of golf Mark Cammarene. "They aren't simply flat with some white sand thrown in. The holes are beautifully framed. John didn't have trees to work with, so he did his framing through shaping."

ULTRADWARF GREENS

The greens are planted in Tifeagle, a top-quality ultradwarf Bermudagrass. Fairways and tees are 419 Bermudagrass with bahiagrass roughs. The Tifeagle putting surfaces roll a moderate 9 to 10 on the Stimpmeter and were designed with Tifeagle in mind.

"John gave the greens some movement, but didn't give them steep slopes," Cammarene said. "The average green is 6,000 square feet and the majority of it is useful pin placement area. On other new courses you might have 8,000 square feet, but half

of it has slopes, bumps and humps that can't support pin placements.

Sanford's "signature" hole is the 18th, a 310-yard par-4. "Not only is it a driveable par-4," Sanford said, "it has a rock waterfall separating the lay-up area from the green.

The water flows over the rocks into cascading pools to the left and right of the green. If you go for the green, you have to take it over the waterfall, which is about a 240-yard carry from the championship tees."

RISK-REWARD FINISHING HOLE

Cammarene, a longtime Nicklaus/Flick Game Improvement School instructor, is also a

Continued on next page



The par-4, 310-yard 18th requires a 233-yard carry from the championship tees.



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big fan of the 18th hole.

"I love short par-4s," he said. "Even from the back tees, you can take the driver out and go for the green. If you hit it, you can make 2. If you miss it, you can make 6. The average guy can take a 3-iron, lay up, make par and go home happy. But if you're one down coming into the

last hole, you can take out the driver and try to knock it on the green. It's just a fun hole."

Cammarene also likes the stretch from 10 through 14. Ten is a relatively short par 5 where "if you drive it to the right spot, you have a good chance at a 3 or 4. Then you start 11 through 14. If you can get through there in even par or 1 over, you're doing well."

Developer Charles Mechling believes the strength of the course

is its variety. "If you asked six people what was their favorite hole, you'd probably get six different answers," he said. "Some think 18 is the cat's meow. Others say 14. Personally, I like 10."

'NEO-TRADITIONAL' TOWN

Mechling and Tom Jones are the two main principals for developer Pointe West Ltd. The course, which cost \$3 million to build, surrounds a residential area of 1,200 housing units, ev-



Pointe West's 8th hole, a par-3 playing at 215 yards from the back tee, features a waste bunker left and stacked bunkers on the right.



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everything from single-family homes to retirement units.

"It's a trend in urban planning, at least down here," said Sanford. "It's called neo-traditional. It's really a town within a town. The whole idea is to go back to the old days, the turn of the century, where houses sit out near the sidewalks, and there are back alleyways. There are front porches where people can socialize.

"It leads to less driving and more walking and bicycling.

"The community also provides all of the basic services," he said. "You've got a commercial center with retail, grocery stores, restaurants, shops, offices and a hospital annex. There's even an equestrian center and a polo field."

The Pointe West club sells non-equity single memberships for \$2,500 annually and family memberships for \$3,000. Green fees range from \$30 to \$60, including cart. "There's really nothing comparable in Vero Beach," Cammarene said. ■

Forse Design hires new associate

HOPWOOD, Pa. — Forse Design, a golf course architectural firm here, has hired Todd Kurl of Lititz as a new associate.

"Our workload has expanded, and is taking us from East Coast to West Coast," said president Ron Forse. "Todd has been interning with us for over one year and just graduated from West Virginia University. He is learning the industry very quickly, and it seems like a perfect fit."

Kurl earned a degree in landscape architecture, with a minor in communications, from WVU. He has performed drafting chores and done cost estimates for Forse Design, following two years of internships with Derck & Edson, one of the leading landscape architecture and civil engineering firms in the East.

"I'm really excited about this work," said the 22-year-old Kurl, a golfer since his junior high days. "Ron Forse and Jim Nagle [a design associate, also from Lititz] have worked on some very interesting projects, including many restorations of courses designed by the great classic architects. I'm very interested in digging into the history of courses and learning a lot about the architects."

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