Going Barefoot: Landmark Golf East opens big

BY JAY FINEGAN

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. — Landmark Golf East has signed aboard as long-term manager of the star-studded quadruplex called Barefoot Resort and Golf here, which features courses by Davis Love III, Greg Norman, Tom Fazio and Pete Dye.

"After visiting the project, we knew Barefoot was something that Landmark wanted to be a part of," said Buzz Gill, president of Landmark Golf East (LGE), an affiliate of Landmark Golf Co. "The scope of this project and the quality of the golf courses make Barefoot Resort very special."

According to Gill, LGE will run every aspect of golf operations, from pro shops and clubhouse functions to course maintenance. He also plans to introduce a membership program for the semi-private Dye Course. Beyond that, Gill intends to set up a homeowners' membership system at the three resort courses—those designed by Norman, Fazio and Love.

All four courses are also open to the public. The primary market consists of players visiting the area on golf package tours. "People on packages make up 95 percent of the play in Myrtle Beach," Gill said.

GIGANTIC RESIDENTIAL PROJECT

The four layouts, which opened last year, will serve as the nucleus of a gigantic residential project. The owner of the 2,500-acre property, Silver Carolina Development Co., plans to build 23 different communities with more than 1,000 homesteads and 4,000 multi-family homes.

The developer also plans to build a "city within a city," with exclusive resort hotels, open-air cafes and shopping venues with atmospheres inspired by Savannah's Riverfront, Charleston's Market and New Orleans' French Quarter.

Shel Royton, vice president of Silver Carolina, said Landmark's track record made the choice easy. "Landmark's experience in the management and operation of golf courses in order to positively impact the surrounding real estate development is unmatched," he claimed. "When you consider the best real estate projects of the last 20 years, the commitment to quality and service demonstrated by Landmark sets the standard for everyone else."

EAST COAST PRESENCE

Landmark Golf East is a newcomer to the area. Last February, Gill and two vice presidents—Tom Sullivan and Joe Huff—moved to Myrtle Beach from Landmark Golf's main headquarters in Indian Wells, near Palm Springs, Calif. They set up shop in Myrtle Beach, landing Barefoot as their first client.

"We felt we really needed a presence on the East Coast, rather than being 3,000 miles away," said Gill, who formerly ran operations, from pro shops and clubhouse functions to course maintenance, from the owners of the nation's most selfless business arm. Mike Donahue and Chris Hamill have been in this business for years. In addition, he has been an important part of the effort to implement the "Palmer Values." Donahue advances to vice president of development, where he will evaluate new business opportunities. As the most traveled member of the project, Hamill has consistently demonstrated one of the most selfless attitudes of anyone I've ever worked with. His impact on the Palmer Golf portfolio is often in a behind-the-scenes manner," said Tim Tierney.
So did we.

**FIVE-STAR PORTFOLIO**

Courses in the Landmark Golf portfolio include Oak Tree Golf Club, La Quinta Hotel and Golf Resort, PGA West, Carmel Valley Ranch and Mission Hills Resort—all in California. Landmark also owns the famous “Skins Game,” played at Landmark Golf in Indio, Calif.

In addition, the firm recently opened Oak Quarry, in River-