

Schmidt-Curley to develop "core" golf outside Phoenix

By ANDREW OVERBECK

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Golf course architects Brian Curley and Lee Schmidt have teamed up with developer Tony Lizza to build a golf-only private club 25 minutes south of Phoenix. They are currently selling memberships up front to finance the construction of Southern Dunes Golf Club, which will be designed with PGA Tour great Fred Couples.

Schmidt-Curley Design hopes to build on the success of their private Palms and Plantation courses in Palm Springs, also designed with Couples. Lizza was also the primary backer on those "players" clubs that have attracted such high profile members as Michael Jordan.

"With the success of those two projects and the fact that there is nothing like this in Phoenix, we are convinced that we will be equally successful here," said Lee Schmidt.

CORE GOLF

Schmidt plans to build a "core" golf course. There will be no homes, no condos, no lavish clubhouse, no tennis courts, and no swimming pool. Instead, there will be a limited membership, caddies will be avail-

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— Lee Schmidt

able, and no tee times will be required.

This "pure golf experience" will run from \$25,000 for a membership that requires \$300 monthly dues to \$80,000 for a lifetime membership that requires no dues. Once 500 single memberships are sold, ownership of the club will be turned over to the members.

"Most of the courses in the Phoenix area have condos and homes lining the golf course," Schmidt said. "You find nothing in the traditional golf experience. Memberships at other private courses range from \$50,000 to well over \$140,000."

By developing the course outside of town, Schmidt-Curley Design and Lizza were able to take advantage of lower land prices and thus slash development costs.

"North Scottsdale land costs upward of \$100,000 an acre. Where we are it costs \$5,000," Schmidt said. "So we can still offer a good club and golf experience and keep membership affordable."

IN THE STYLE OF SHADOW RIDGE

According to Schmidt, Southern Dunes will be a classical design featuring bunkers with high flashes and native grasses in outlying areas, as opposed to the typical target desert golf that features clusters of cacti and boulders.

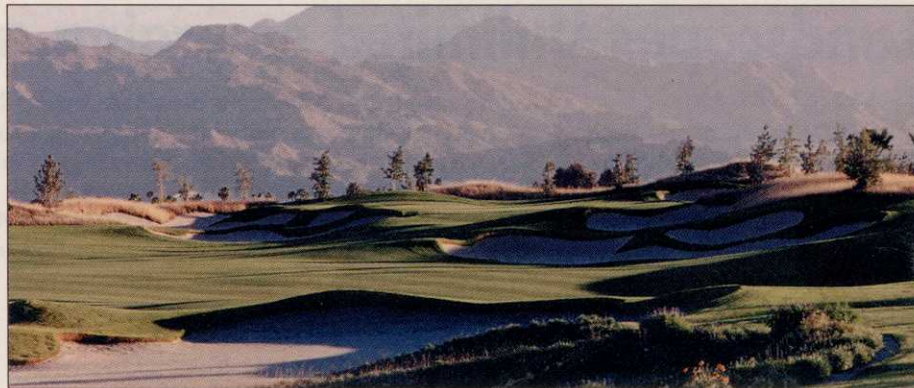
"It will have a native dunes look, similar to the design we did with Nick Faldo at Shadow Ridge in Palm Desert [Calif.]," he said. "We will build table-top tees so we can maximize the turf acreage in the main play areas."

The club will also feature a modest 27,000-square-foot clubhouse and a practice facility with six par-3 holes. Construction is due to begin this fall, and will be handled by Flagstick, Schmidt-Curley's

construction management firm.

If this project goes well, Schmidt-Curley may look to develop other properties.

"It is difficult to market something up front that does not exist," said Schmidt. "But the Plantation and the Palms have waiting lists right now and there is an even larger golf market here. This is our first venture as a co-developer, but we are bullish about it."



Schmidt-Curley's most recent design collaboration with Nick Faldo at Marriott's Shadow Ridge in Palm Desert, Calif., reflects the prototypical style for the new Southern Dunes Golf Club in Phoenix.



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