

Nicklaus brings affordable golf to Silicon Valley

By DOUG SAUNDERS

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Jack Nicklaus' latest daily-fee facility, the Valley Course at Coyote Creek Golf Club, opened for play here this summer, installing the final piece of a 36-hole complex developed by Castle & Cooke Golf Properties.

The new layout joins the Tournament Course, a Nicklaus signature layout that debuted in 1999, which hosts a Senior PGA Tour event — the Siebel Classic — every March.

The creation of these two courses on a 2,000-acre site — just minutes from the nerve center of the "new economy," Silicon Valley — was actually the solution to a pressing problem for Castle & Cooke: the need to upgrade an existing course on the property.

OLD RIVERSIDE COURSE

Castle & Cooke has owned this property for decades and built the original Riverside Golf Club here in the 1950s. After developing the top-flight Tournament Course here, the company decided to renovate the Riverside course. However, there were some roadblocks.

"This piece of property had been determined to be an 'urban preserve,' which limited the ability to develop home sites," explained Gordon Carter, vice president and general manager of Castle & Cooke Golf Properties. "The local planning boards were more receptive to the idea of a golf expansion. By renovating the original golf course and adding another upscale public facility, we felt we could fill a desperate need in the southern part of the Bay Area."

BRINGING NICKLAUS ABOARD

The original golf course was a blend of nines designed by Jack Fleming and William F. Bell. Castle & Cooke decided to have Nicklaus create a course first to



The third hole at Nicklaus' Valley Course at Coyote Creek Golf Club

stimulate interest and exposure and then complete the renovations of the original track.

The two courses provide a striking contrast. While the Tournament Course is wide open, with seven holes sliding into the hills, the old Riverside track occupies a relatively flat piece of ground. The old fairways are lined with now-mature Monterey pines, cypress and oak trees, providing a traditional feel.

To create the new Valley Course, Nicklaus first had to deal with a routing dilemma. The new clubhouse would serve both courses, and the developers wanted returning nines on both layouts. While this was relatively easy to accomplish with the new course, Nicklaus had to create five new holes and weave the other holes through the trees, saving as many as possible.

"We made an effort to save trees, and

only took out a few to create some new tees and develop some different fairway shapes," said Valley Course superintendent Chad Scott.

FAITHFUL TO ORIGINAL DESIGN

After scraping out the old fairways, the course was not drastically reshaped. The Valley layout, at 7,068 yards, stays true to the original contours with only subtle bunker flashes and soft fairway rolls added for perspective by Nicklaus and the course builder — Elon Golf Construction Company of Escalante, Calif.

Both courses are planted with rye with slightly different greens; the Tournament Course features G-2 bentgrass and the Valley Course sports Dominant Plus bentgrass. Scott is confident he could bring the Valley greens up to tournament caliber, and he might have to. The final routing for the next Tour event could employ 13 holes on the

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Golf expanding in Georgia's Golden Isles

BRUNSWICK, Ga. — In October, Coastal Pines Golf Course became the latest development in a collection of new courses and renovations here and throughout the Golden Isles of Georgia.

Designed by Mark Bennett of Augusta Golf Designs in Augusta, Ga., the 18-hole public facility stretches 6,803 yards.

But Coastal Pines is only one of a series of new developments in the area. The Retreat Golf Course, at the Sea Island Golf Club on St. Simons Island, opened in August. The Retreat, designed by golf pro and course architect Davis Love III, is the final leg following an extensive makeover of Sea Island's golf courses.

\$140 MILLION INVESTED

The Seaside Golf Course, designed by Tom Fazio, reopened in the fall 1999. The renovated course includes the former Marshland nine-hole layout, designed by Joe Lee in 1973, as the front nine and the Seaside nine, originally designed by Colt & Alison in 1929, as the back nine. The Plantation course, designed by Rees Jones, reopened in 1998.

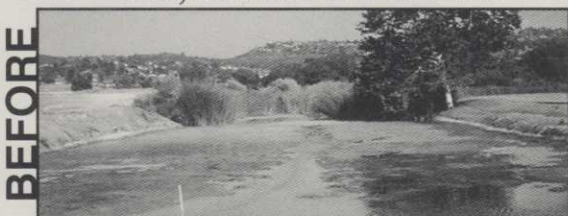
More than \$140 million has been invested by the Sea Island Company to make capital improvements and renovations aimed at improving accommodations, amenities and guest services.

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Myshrall debuts in Maine

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Ross, the course is very demanding. "We've cut back some of the tall fescues a bit to make some penalties not so severe in areas where players might miss shots," he said, "but we're not looking to make any extreme changes. The course plays fairly, it's just a little bit

more challenging than most public courses."

Other beautification projects and a paved cart path are also planned for the future. "We made great time opening all 18 holes in about 14 and a half months," said Michaud. "One of my biggest challenges was keeping up with Lennie."

"The front nine was mostly

completed by mid-July – seeded and with irrigation," Michaud explained. "The back nine is fairly wide open with very few cuts and fills required, so Lennie just laid it into the ground. It wasn't easy getting the back nine seeded while maintaining and growing in the front nine. I didn't have a large crew, so we were scrambling there for a while."

Myshrall and Michaud are cur-

rently on the look out to build another course together here in Maine. "We're looking for the right piece of land," said Michaud. "I'll stay on at Fox Ridge until another course project gets underway." The assistant superintendent, Ryan Elliott, who followed Michaud from his previous position at the Sugarloaf Golf Course, is more than capable to take over, said Michaud. ■

Stadler, Davis

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the elevation changes are very subtle," said Davis. "At its highest point it is 8,020 feet and at its lowest it is 7,920 feet."

"It will have sort of a heathland style look to it," he continued. "There are not many trees, the course plays along the valley wetlands and Ten Mile Creek and has huge mountain backdrops."

The course, which is due to open in August 2002, will feature Dominant bentgrass greens and tees, a bluegrass and ryegrass mixture in the fairways and fescue in the roughs. Native grasses and sage will frame the fairways.



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Tripp Davis and Associates has also broken ground at Raven Nest Golf Course in Huntsville, Texas. The City of Huntsville will operate the municipal course when it opens in fall 2002.

"This is the first project that we have done with pine trees and sandy soil," Davis said. "We got started in late summer and plan on grassing the course next summer."

The par 71, 7001-yard course is being built on 183 acres of land owned by Sam Houston State University. The layout will serve as the home facility for the university's golf teams.

Raven Nest, which is being built by Duinink Brothers Golf, will feature TifSport fairways and TifEagle greens. ■

Golden Isles

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The Sea Palms Golf and Tennis Resort also has completed a three-year, \$4-million renovation project on its three nine-holes courses: Tall Pines, Great Oaks, and Sea Palms West. Work began in 1998 with the Tall Pines layout followed by Great Oaks in 2000. Sea Palms West was completed in August.

The Jekyll Island Authority has invested more than \$500,000 for improvements on its three 18-hole golf courses and the historic Great Dunes 9-hole oceanside layout. Intermediate level gold tees have been added to the Oleander, Indian Mound and Pine Lakes courses. Other improvements include rebuilt bunkers and new cart paths.

The Pines Lakes layout, designed by Dick Wilson and Joe Lee in 1968, closed this fall for a one-year renovation. The \$2.5 million project by designer Clyde Johnston will include new lakes and bunkers, new irrigation system and cart paths, redesigned greens and an upgraded drainage system. ■