

BRIEFS

CHILDS FIRM BUILDING 18 IN ILLINOIS

SYLVAN LAKE, Mich. — Crossroads Development Co., a subsidiary of Don Childs Associates, a golf course architectural and consulting firm based here, has signed an agreement to purchase some 225 acres in Petersburg, Ill. The land is covered by hills, valleys and densely forested bluffs rising more than 125 feet above the Sangamon River valley. Crossroads will initially develop an 18-hole course, with plans to eventually add nine more holes on 88 additional acres. Plans also include the construction of a hotel conference center. Petersburg, originally platted and surveyed by Abraham Lincoln, is about 20 minutes northwest of state capital Springfield, Ill. Construction of the course will begin this year, with an expected opening in summer 2003.

GCBA CERTIFIES TWO COURSE BUILDERS

LINCOLN, Neb. — Foremost Construction Co. and Highland Golf have been certified by the Golf Course Builders Association of America. Foremost, of Temecula, Calif., has been involved in more than 250 courses around the world, from the United States to South Africa, Thailand, England and Spain. Highland Golf, founded in 1997 and based in Avon Park, Fla., has worked with numerous architects on courses in the United States and Puerto Rico. GCBA-certified builders must have been in the golf construction business at least five years, provide professional and financial references, attend one GCBA education session annually, pass a written exam and engage in ethical business practices.

Mirabel Golf Club takes shape on former Norman course site

By DAVID HUBBARD

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — When Mirabel Golf Club opens here in December, the story of what might have been will have faded to vague memory. Like the legend of the Phoenix rising from its ashes to grow anew, what was nearly the area's most difficult daily-fee facility was ultimately destroyed to make way for the present 720-acre private golf community.

The project is being developed by the high-end, San Francisco-based Discovery Land Co. for the owner, a Dallas-based investment firm called Terrabrook.

Considering that the former Greg Norman target-style design — called Stonehaven — featured a mere 45 acres of turfgrass, Mike Meldman of Discovery Land decided that the original concept would prove far too challenging for high handicappers. He wanted a tamer track for the exclusive club he had in mind.

Without much debate, Discovery officials called in the bulldozers and prevailed upon their long-time associate, golf architect Tom Fazio, to come up with a totally new and considerably more ample layout.

EXPENSIVE PROPOSITION

At \$65 million for the land, plus an additional \$7 million to dig up the Norman course and then redesign and rebuild a new one, Mirabel stands as Discovery Land's most expensive undertaking to date.

It joins a sparkling company portfolio that includes the nearby Estancia Golf Club, along with The Santa Lucia Preserve in Monterey, Calif.; Kukio Golf Club in Kona, Hawaii;

Ironhorse Golf Club, in Whitefish, Mont.; CordeValle Golf Club, in San Martin, Calif.; and Vaquero Golf Club, in Westlake, Texas.

Working from a new western regional office in Scottsdale, the Fazio group concocted in an altogether fresh configuration.

At an elevation nearly 2,000 feet higher than the Phoenix megalopolis to the south and west, Mirabel offers sweeping panoramic views from the golf course, clubhouse, and verandas of reclusive Mirabel residences. The high desert vista takes in all prominent landmarks and mountain ranges for as far as 90 miles, and looks down on city lights at night.

STATE-MANDATED TURFGRASS

Mirabel will play through a secluded desert pocket in far north Scottsdale, in the rolling chaparral, across the street from the massive Desert Mountain complex and its five Jack Nicklaus signature courses (with a sixth one in the works).

Utilizing every square foot of the state-mandated 90-acre turfgrass allotment, and borrowing only minimally from the former

layout — namely, irrigation hardware and the original holding ponds — Fazio's solution is much more conducive to golf course living. He completely repositioned the ninth and 18th fairways to allow views of the action from the clubhouse.

Stretching as long as 7,200 yards from the back tees at par 71, Fazio's graceful fairway contours and swales play in sharp contrast to the dry desert washes and granite outcroppings. Arizona's land usage laws basically mandate forced carries over natu-



Fazio and his team on site at Mirabel, which is slated to open in December

ral terrain. The design may encroach on only 10 percent of the total area of the washes and arroyos, making the designers very selective in the compromises they must cede to Mother Nature.

WHITE SHARK ERADICATED

In this open setting, Mirabel offers 310 homesites, from half-acre lots to three-acre parcels, ranging in price from \$250,000 to over \$600,000. Forty-five golf villas will also be available. Fazio's redesign

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First Nicklaus course in New Zealand to be built near Auckland

NORTH PALM BEACH, Fla. — Jack Nicklaus will enter a new corner of the globe after signing an agreement to design his first signature course in New Zealand. The country's first Nicklaus course will be the Kinloch Golf Resort, located just south of Auckland in the Lake Taupo district.

The design contract was signed with Kinloch Golf Resort Limited, which owns the land in this North Island destination and was formed to develop the 630-acre project. The property also will feature 80 estate sites.

The presence of an 18-hole Nicklaus signature course will only add fuel to the large, fast-growing tourism and golf markets in New Zealand. According to a McNair survey, there

are more than 460,000 golfers in New Zealand and more than 350 golf courses spread throughout the islands, the more preferred of which is North Island.

Lake Taupo is accessible from the New Zealand capital of Wellington and is a three-hour drive south of Auckland, the country's largest city.

"The land on which we will design the golf course offers a mixture of rolling terrain, and is framed by hills that slope toward Lake Taupo," Nicklaus said.



Jack Nicklaus

Palmer Design brings affordable golf to Vail Valley

By JAY FINEGAN

EAGLE, Colo. — Amid a building boom of super-exclusive and super-expensive golf clubs in the Vail Valley, Arnold Palmer has come to the rescue of the ordinary Joe. With a signature course, no less.

Eagle Ranch Golf Course, the first new daily-fee layout in the valley since 1975, opened for play this summer, providing golfers with inspiring mountain scenery, superb guest service and affordable green fees.

It's only the third public course in this burgeoning alpine region about two hours west of Denver. "This is something the valley has been begging for for quite some time," said Jeff Boyer, the club's director of golf.

A NORMAN ROCKWELL SCENE

Palmer's design, shepherded by on-site project architects Vicki Martz and Eric Larson, stretches to 7,500 yards from the tips and down to 5,500 yards from the

"This is something the valley has been begging for for quite some time."

— Jeff Boyer

short tees. At an altitude of 6,600 feet — 1,600 feet lower than Vail — the club's season will last about two months longer than the high-elevation private tracks built on the mountainsides around this emerging golf mecca.

Developed by East West Partners, a big player in the Vail Valley, and built by Niebur Golf, of Colorado Springs, the new complex is being managed by Western Golf Properties, based in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Set on a former working cattle ranch, the course and surrounding amenities lie on 1,575 acres in what's called the Brush Creek Valley. "They're building a really neat development," said Boyer. "There's going to be a commercial center with a main street, like a Norman Rockwell scene. The developers built a wonderful park with community centers, dedicated to the Town of Eagle to be used as the town sees fit. About 500 volunteers



Vicki Martz

showed up to build a playground. Recreation paths go all the way through the property."

FUTURE MUNICIPAL COURSE?

The course was constructed for about \$10 million, including the clubhouse and all infrastructure.

"The developers have basically set it up as a municipal course," Boyer said. "In a few years the Town of Eagle will probably take over the debt of the golf course and oversee the operation. But that's down the road."

Local players will enjoy a break on green fees. Eagle County residents have to shell out \$55, but Town of Eagle residents pay only \$30. Rates shoot up to \$82 for outsiders. That's a far cry from another valley

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Fought, Lehman

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Diego.

Earlier this year, the two formalized their partnership, setting up shop here in Arizona. So far, it looks like a winning combination.

SEPARATE PATHS

Fought, the PGA Tour's Rookie of the Year in 1979, left the pro circuit in 1985. Sidelined by a vertebrae problem, he began design-

ing courses and renovations with Bob Cupp.

Later, from 1995 through 2000, he designed a number of courses while working with OB Sports, including Washington National, in Seattle; Cimarron, near Palm Springs; and Langdon Farms, just outside Portland, Ore.

"I resigned from OB Sports last fall," Fought said. "Tom [Lehman] was doing projects with other architects. He came back to me a year

and a half ago, and said he particularly enjoyed working with me."

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

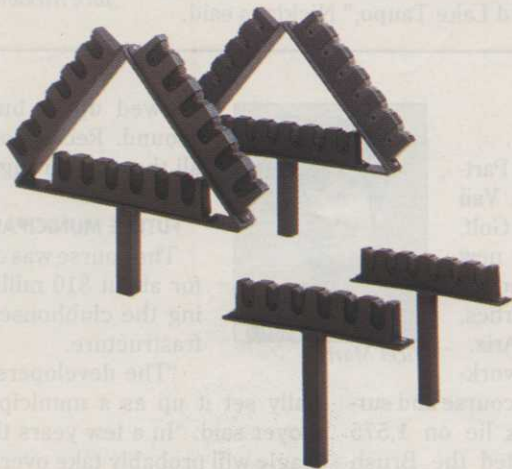
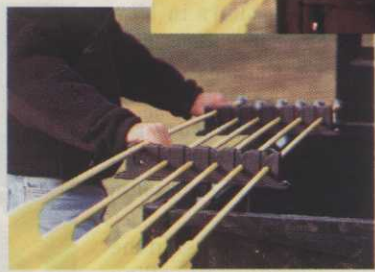
Lehman, winner of the 1996 British Open and multiple other PGA Tour events, had honed his design skills working with Arnold Palmer and the Hurdzan, Fry team.

"Maybe our biggest asset as a team is that John has all the technical expertise one needs as a designer," Lehman said. "I'm learning and steadily growing in that area."



Fought and Lehman rebuilt The Farms (above) in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif.

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Six months into their partnership, Lehman and Fought have landed some high-profile projects. They've begun design work for WhiteStone (Phoenix), The Preserve (east of Scottsdale), WindSong Farm (Minneapolis), and Andreas Ranch (Indio, Calif.). They're also crafting a second course at The Gallery.

WINNING NOTORIETY

Lehman, for his part, is deeply involved in the new venture. This is not a deal where he simply lends his name and prestige, "We go look at sights together," Fought said. "We do planning together. He visited The Farms 12 times. This is a real business, and he's involved with the whole thing." ■

Eagle Ranch

Continued from previous page

course where locals can sometimes get on – Beaver Creek – where green fees run in the \$140 range.

Unique to golf courses in the area, Eagle Ranch features the Uplink GPS system on each cart. The unit not only provides golfers with exact yardages, it also allows them to order food from the clubhouse.

Course construction and development were managed by superintendent John Martin, with his two assistants – Derek Rose and Pat Nunn.

"The crew worked very hard here and I was extremely pleased with the grow-in," Martin said. "The contrast of the bluegrass tees and fairways and the bentgrass greens, the many native areas, the restoration of old wetlands and the overall beauty of this area will be very memorable to golfers." ■

Mirabel

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places the larger home lots back away from the fairways.

The 25,000-square-foot clubhouse complex, complete with swimming pools and tennis courts, will provide the crowning touch to Mirabel's luxurious lifestyle. Construction on the other club amenities will begin once the golf course opens. Membership here is by invitation only, and the 375 members will fork over an \$85,000 initiation fee. ■