

BRIEFS

EHRlich SIGNS ABOARD AT WESTERN GOLF

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Wendy Ehrlich has joined Western Golf Properties as director of sales and marketing. She will expand and strengthen the marketing department, the company said, and provide additional support to the 22 courses currently managed by Western Golf. A former trial lawyer and business executive, Ehrlich is a 2000 graduate of Harvard University's Golf Course Design and Development Program and a four-handicap player. She will focus on ensuring that Western Golf's courses maximize their potential in driving revenues and hitting financial targets. Also, Bridget Berry has been hired as marketing coordinator, and will assist in advertising, Web site launches and marketing.



Wendy Ehrlich

VIRGINIA COURSES CHANGE OWNERSHIP

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. — Hampton Roads Golf Clubs LLC has acquired two courses from National Golf Operating Properties for a combined \$6.75 million. One is Honey Bee Golf Club, in Virginia Beach, an 18-hole daily-fee layout established in 1989. The other is Chesapeake Golf Club, in Chesapeake, Va., also 18 holes and open since 1989. Both courses are daily-fee facilities. The properties changed hands in June, with the transaction handled by real estate broker Douglas Henkel.

KEMPERSPORTS ADDS TWO CLUBS

NORTHBROOK, Ill. — The Kansas City Parks and Recreation Department has signed a contract with KemperSports Management to operate Hodge Park Golf Course and to open the new Shoal Creek Golf Course. The two layouts are adjacent to each other and make up two of the five city golf courses. KemperSports has operated Falcon Ridge Golf Course in Lenexa, Kan., since 1997 and Independence Golf Course since 1998. Architect Steve Wollford took 180 acres of land and sculpted 18 holes over rolling terrain and through heavily wooded areas to construct Shoal Creek, the city's newest golf course. Duane Sander is the superintendent.

High Sierras: Intrawest Golf lands Coyote Moon contract

By JAY FINEGAN

TRUCKEE, Calif. — Intrawest Golf has been selected to manage the popular daily-fee Coyote Moon Golf Club here in Truckee, near Lake Tahoe in the High Sierras.

The par-72 course plays to 7,100 yards at an elevation of 6,300 feet. The layout, designed by former PGA Tour pro Brad Bell and his partner Chris Steel, rolls through 250 acres of secluded piney forests and sweeps over valleys, ravines and lakes.

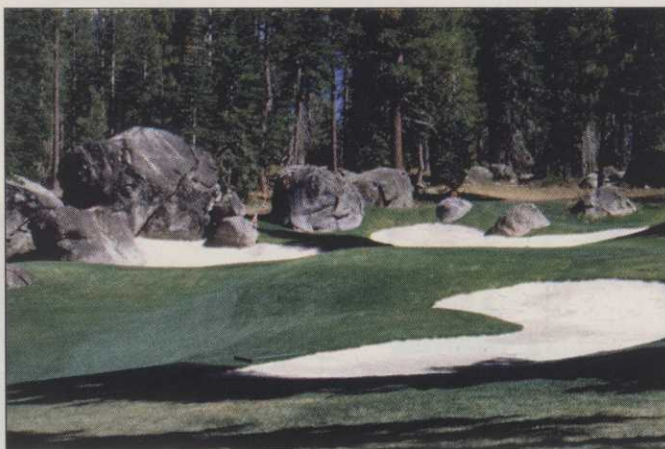
The 18-hole track is rare in California, as it is a stand-alone project, built strictly for golf, not to sell building lots. Not a single house disrupts the natural environment.

Coyote Moon, which opened last year, is ranked as one of the top five new courses in California by *California Golf Guide*, and Intrawest hopes to make the facility even better.

Golfers are teased to play shots into greens protected by huge rock outcroppings, hit to pins 80 feet below over creeks, and nail drives over tantalizingly long lakes. Throughout the course,

the challenge of shaping shots to negotiate nature's purest challenges adds to the enjoyment of playing on a unique piece of property.

"The club has a strong fan base, and is widely recognized among players as one of the top new facilities in the area," said Jeff Stipee, senior vice president of



A view of the 12th hole at Coyote Moon

Intrawest Golf. "Our game plan is to integrate the things the club already does well with the practices and procedures that have earned Intrawest golf courses around the country sterling reputations for exceptional conditioning and guest service."

Intrawest Golf, headquartered in Scottsdale, Ariz., is a division of Intrawest Corp., a Vancouver-based firm that also operates premier ski resorts.

Empire Golf unveiling two new layouts this fall, including first in Florida

ROYAL PALM BEACH, Fla. — Empire Golf will add two more courses to its growing portfolio of high-end, daily-fee clubs with the fall openings of Branton Woods Golf Club in Dutchess County, N.Y., and The Links at Madison Green, here in Royal Palm Beach.

Branton Woods, north of New York City in the Hudson Valley region, promises to be as challenging a layout as any course, public or private, in the tri-state area. Designed by Eric Bergstol, president and

founder of Empire Golf, the course cruises through woods and fields, with mountain views on many holes.

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Number four at The Links at Madison Green, a par-3 hole playing from 219 yards down to 118 yards

Oki's Hawks Prairie adds two courses

By JAY FINEGAN

BELLEVUE, Wash. — Hawks Prairie LLC has purchased two daily-fee layouts at Meridian Campus in Lacey, near the Washington state capital of Olympia. Meriwood Golf Course and Vicwood Golf Links bring to six the number of courses owned by Oki Developments, based here in Bellevue.

Hawks Prairie is a division of Oki Developments, a diversified company whose



The Vicwood Course offers scenic vistas of Puget Sound and Mount Rainier. The 6,882-yard track was designed by Peter L.H. Thompson.

Errant golf shots 'natural as rainfall,' court rules

By JOE DEVANNEY

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — In an unusual decision handed down recently, the Illinois Supreme Court formally declared it common knowledge that "golfers do not always hit their balls straight." Crooked or wild shots, the court said, are "as natural as gravity or ordinary rainfall."

And with that, the case was closed, but not before imparting some useful advice for course developers trying to forge neighborly relations with nearby homeowners.

The ruling involved a lawsuit originally filed by plaintiffs Larry and Choh-Ying Geddes, of Kane County. They believed that Mill Creek Country Club, adjacent to their property, committed intentional trespass and nuisance against them. The club was allegedly culpable because errant golf balls were continuously hit onto their land from the fifth hole.

Before reaching the state Supreme Court, the Geddes had asked the trial court, and then an appellate court, for compensatory and punitive damages from Mill Creek, a daily-fee facility in Geneva, Ill., managed by American Golf. They also had sought to enjoin the club "from causing and allowing the continual trespass of golf balls to occur."

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

The facts of the case date back to 1986, when the Geddes purchased 16.5 acres of land. At the same time, a golf club, which would eventually become Mill Creek, was being contemplated as part of a planned development in the adjacent area.

The plaintiffs, who used their property both as a residence and as a nursery/agricultural business, eventually signed a 1996 agreement with the developers. It provided for an eight-foot-high chain link fence with two 14-foot entrance gates along the common border of the properties.

One provision of the agreement stated that "the fence and gates will be installed when the golf course fairway that borders the Geddes' western property line is constructed." Other references to a "golf course" were scattered throughout the document.

2,128 LOST BALLS

The plaintiffs later argued, however, that the agreement never mentioned golf balls. They had always insisted, they said,

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investments include a professional soccer team, a restaurant and real estate holdings. Scott Oki is the group's chairman. Terms of the acquisition were not disclosed.

Developed by Vicwood Meridian Partnership, the two courses are part of a 1,153-acre master-planned community. When completed, the project will include several residential neighborhoods, two parks, schools and a business center.

VIEWS OF MOUNT RAINIER

The Meriwood course, designed by Bill

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Hawks Prairie

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Overdorf, opened in 1995. The championship layout is considered among the toughest in the state. Cascading waterfalls, native wetlands, dense forests and tiered greens add beauty and challenge.

Vicwood, designed by Peter L.H. Thompson and completed in 1999, reflects Scottish accents with a definite Northwest twist provided by scenic vistas of Mount Rainier and Puget Sound.

Both Vicwood and Meriwood have appeared on *Golf Digest's* list of top affordable courses.

Empire Golf

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"Branton Woods will rival any golf course in the Empire Golf portfolio," Bergstol said. "It's a beautiful course, and as with all our properties, we've made every effort to preserve the natural wildlife with minimal disruption to the native environment."

A 6,000-square-foot clubhouse will be completed by the start of the 2002 golf season.

PINE BARRENS AT MADISON GREEN

The Madison Green course, a 7,000-yard layout, has more than 40 acres of lakes scattered across the links.

"If you took all the great golf courses in the Palm Beach area, you'd probably find a little bit of each at this facility," said Dennis Preslar, Empire Golf's on-site project manager. The course is slated to open this October.

Architect John Sanford retained much of the natural vegetation, although some revegetation will take place, including the replanting of 500 palm trees, 250 oaks, 1,500 native trees and more than 20,000 native plants.

"The unique thing about the course will be the development of the pine barrens," Sanford said. "The predominant native tree species is the Florida slash pine. We've tried to retain as much as we can by developing 10 to 12 acres of pine barrens within the transition areas."

DIFFERENT LOOK

"We'll use recycled concrete screenings, three to four inches deep," he added. "It's nice because you can run carts through there and the ball sits up well on top of it. It will give the course a completely different look than anything in the daily-fee market in this area."

Sanford moved about 300,000 cubic yards of dirt to shape the \$3-million layout. Florida-based Quality Grassing & Services is the course builder. Madison Green marks the first Florida project for Empire Golf, which operates several courses in New York and New Jersey. ■

MANAGEMENT STAYING ON

The new owners plan to retain the services of Golf Resources Northwest, which manages Vicwood and Meriwood. No immediate changes are anticipated.

In addition to the Indian Summer course and the recent acquisitions, the Oki portfolio also includes four other courses in Washington state – one private and three daily-fee. The public Golf



The fourth hole at the Meriwood course, part of a master-planned community

Club at Newcastle in Newcastle opened its second 18-hole layout – the China Course – in July, joining the existing Coal Course, which opened in May 1999.

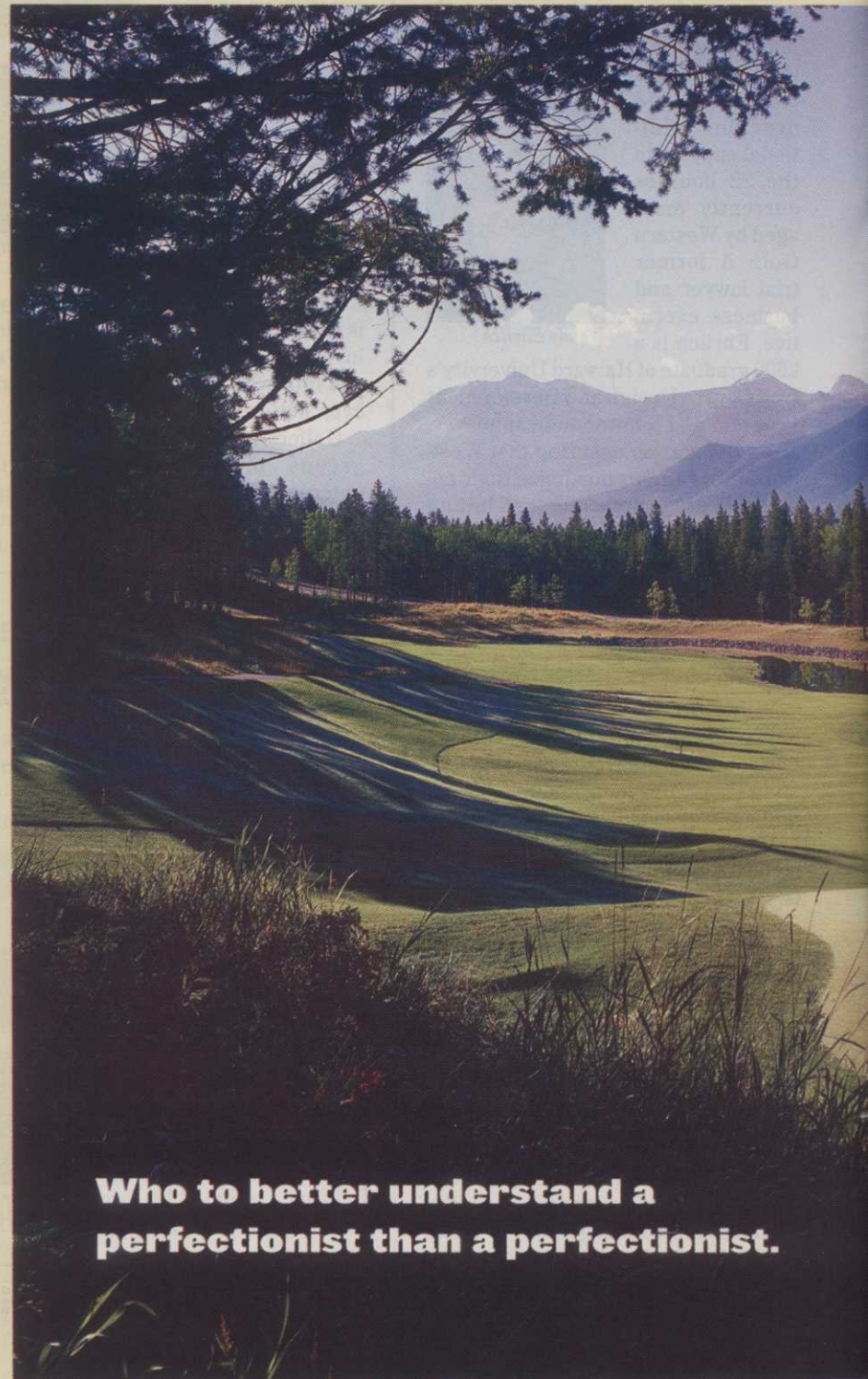
Upon completion of their China Course round, on weekends, golfers are greeted by a bagpiper on the 18th hole. The bagpiper accompanies players as they make their way from the final green to the clubhouse. ■



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