Lake Las Vegas takes next step

Owners hope third 18-hole course adds to attraction as golf destination

By Doug Saunders

HENDERSON, Nev. — Lake Las Vegas Resort, the ambitious $4 billion development 17 miles south of Las Vegas, has been emerging as the newest of the three courses the shores of a 320-acre man-made lake for the past 10 years. This massive development project already boasts two Jack Nicklaus Signature golf courses and a 425-room Hyatt Regency hotel. It takes its next big step toward becoming the premier golf destination in the Southwest this month with the opening of its second public golf course, The Falls Course designed by Tom Fazio. “The Falls course is built on a very dramatic stretch of mountainside that offers over 400 feet of elevation change. Tom Weiskopf did a masterful job blending the layout into this rugged terrain and this course will be a great compliment to our Reflection Bay Golf Club which opened in 1996,” said director of golf John Herndon. The driving force behind Lake Las Vegas is a partnership of visionaries that include Transcontinental Properties of Santa Barbara, Calif., former chairman and CEO of Caesar’s World Harry Gluck, and Sid and Lee Bass of Fort Worth, Texas, who own the property. The Falls Course will join Reflection Bay Golf Club as an amenity for resort guests at Lake Las Vegas, as well as the private South Shore Club that hugs the shoreline of Lake Mead, which was created by damming the Colorado River, which flows south of Las Vegas. Will ultimately in-...
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“Two hazards we avoid at the Atlanta Athletic Club are motor pump failure and lightning damage”

Todd Daniel - GCS, Atlanta Athletic Club - Highlands Course
Host Site of the 2001 PGA Championship

Lake Las Vegas adds third course

Continued from previous page

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The front nine was pretty straightforward to build but the back nine was a bit more difficult to create a routing as we had to swing the holes above the designated home sites. The steep elevation drops made it difficult to get heavy equipment around efficiently," Weiskopf explained.

The back nine is memorable for the stretch of holes 12 through 15. These holes climb to the highest point to provide views of both Lake Las Vegas and the city of Las Vegas to the northwest. Weiskopf created two holes with drops of over 100 feet from tee to fairway.

"These types of holes really become a leap of faith as a designer, as you are never really sure how good the golf hole is going to be until it is completely done. You can end up with a hole that either becomes too tough and controversial or a golf hole that makes players want to come back again. I think that we ended up with the latter at the Falls Course," Weiskopf said.

The $11 million course will stretch to 7,250 yards over 100 acres of maintained fairways and is planted with Tifway 2 bermudagrass fairways and tees and Crenshaw bentgrass for the greens.

The Falls Course is the third of what may become a collection of up to six golf courses to be built at Lake Las Vegas. Ground will be broken on a Fazio-designed layout this November as the developers are in full swing to create this international resort destination.

Along with the golf courses, Transcontinental Properties has teamed up with Ritz Carlton Hotels and Intrawest Corp. to build MonteLago Village, which will open next spring. This Mediterranean-style village will include a 350-room luxury hotel, 800 condominiums, a 50-acre village with cobblestone streets with commercial space, office space and a 40,000-square-foot casino.

Talking Rock Ranch to open

Continued from previous page

Indian Tribe as a means of preserving and protecting the natural environment. More than a third of the property is dedicated to open space. The plan seems to have paid off, as the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office awarded Talking Rock Ranch its 2002 Heritage Preservation Award.

According to Morrish, the owners of the property wanted an environment where golfers and homeowners would coexist in harmony. In designing the course, Morrish said the owners essentially told him, “Here’s 3,500 acres. Put the course where it makes the most sense.” The result is a course that plays at more than 7,300 yards from the back tees, with five tee boxes on each hole.

Last summer, RLS Development, which managed construction, brought in Native Resources International, an organization that works to preserve indigenous materials that were destroyed as a result of intense development in the Southwest. The company salvaged approximately 150 native trees from the golf course and roadway areas. These trees were later replanted on the site.