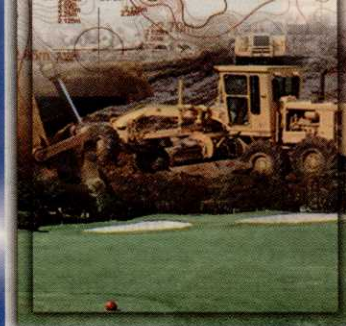


DEVELOPMENT & RENOVATION



BRIEFS

QUALITY GRASSING BREAKS GROUND ON RENOVATION

LITHIA, Fla. — Quality Grassing & Services Inc., winner of the 2002 *Golf Course News* Large Builder of the Year Award, has begun work on a \$1.6 million renovation at Point Mallard Golf Course in Decatur, Ala. The renovation began last month and includes rebuilding all 18 greens and completing extensive tee, irrigation, drainage and car path renovations. Architect John LaFoy is overseeing the work.

HEARN/ALBANESE HIRES MARKETING FIRM

BLOOMFIELD HILLS, Mich. — Raymond Hearn/Paul Albanese Golf Course Designs Inc. has hired Golf Marketing Services to handle its marketing and public relations efforts. Hearn/Albanese hired Golf Marketing Services to handle promotion of several high-profile projects the firm has coming online in the next few years. Among the firm's current project are Egg Island Golf & Yacht Club in North Eleuthra, Bahamas, and Mill Creek Golf Club in Rochester, New York.

CUPP-DESIGNED OLD ORANGE UNDERWAY

FORT MEYERS, Fla. — Initial development has begun on Old Orange, an 18-hole Bob Cupp-designed golf course at Verandah, the Bonita Bay Group's master-planned community here. The course is scheduled to open later this year. Work began in mid-December and has involved digging lakes, beginning drainage work and moving dirt. Bonita Bay expects to begin grassing the course in March or April.

LUMMI DEVELOPMENT CHANGING NAME

ATLANTA — Lummi Development Inc. will change its name to Signature Horizons Group Inc. in mid-March. Signature Horizons acquired a controlling interest in Lummi in October. The company is also moving toward a closing of its acquisition of Sea Trail Plantation and Golf Links in Sunset Beach, N.C.

Bunker renovation protects Pelican Hill's 'Fazio look'

By ANDREW OVERBECK

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. — Work is underway here at Pelican Hill Golf Club to renovate all 125 bunkers and protect Tom Fazio's original design.

Director of agronomy Steve Thomas is overseeing the renovation, which began in late January.

"Over the last 12 years the bunkers have lost the 'Fazio look,'" said Thomas. "We wanted to maintain the character of the original design and get back the fat bunker lip."

"We will make some architectural changes by expanding some bunkers and making others smaller," he added. "We will also improve drainage and put in a higher-quality sand."

The Irvine Co., which owns and

manages the 36-hole club, decided to shut the South Course down entirely and shift play to the North Course while renovation work took place. When the South Course re-opens in March, work will commence on the North Course.

"That is one of the benefits to being 36 holes," said Thomas. "The Irvine Co. decided it was a good time of year to go ahead and close a course, because it is typically our rainy sea-



A worker excavates a bunker to bring back the fat lip of Fazio's original design.

son when play is lower."

The company brought in two builders, Jessup, Md.-based

McDonald & Sons and La Quinta, Calif.-based Peerless Golf Inc. to

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Raynor's Mountain Lake reborn



Architect Brian Silva restored bunkers and greens to Seth Raynor's squared-off design of 1916.

By DEREK RICE

LAKE WALES, Fla. — Grow-in is completed and play has resumed on Mountain Lake Golf Course, where architect Brian Silva restored the course to its original 1916 Seth Raynor design.

Over the years, many of the

greens and bunkers, which had been squared, had softened into more rounded or amorphous shapes, said Dorothy Blackwell, director of member relations for Mountain Lake.

"Our members voted last year to restore the course to

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Developers learn from Dark Horse experience

By DOUG SAUNDERS

AUBURN, Calif. — Last year, the latest entry into the crowded Northern California golf market, Dark Horse Golf Club, opened for play, culminating a 13-year struggle to bring a quality public golf venue to the Sierra foothill region. The developers, Ed Fralick and his son Chad, are heartened to see the tee sheets begin to fill up with players after spending so much time, energy and money wading through permitting meetings, EIRs and mitigations to bring the 7,218-yard Keith Foster-designed layout on line.

The rambling track flows over 420 acres of land that are defined by dramatic elevation changes, a series of natural wetlands and thick stands of mature oak trees.

Foster was fortunate to be given free rein of the entire 1,045 acres in order to find the best layout for the course. This was an opportunity that few architects ever get and Foster searched for the best routing to capture the prominent natural features to compliment the course.

This is the Fralicks' first foray into golf course development but they didn't come into the field without some background. Their years as successful custom homebuilders and housing developers in the Sacramento area gave them the confidence to take on the challenge. But they discovered that while there are many similarities in golf construction and home construction, there are also striking

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Openings decline for second consecutive year

JUPITER, Fla. — For the second consecutive year, golf course openings in the United States slowed, according to the National Golf Foundation's (NGF) *Golf Facilities in the U.S. Report*.

The NGF said the report may signal that construction is coming back in line with demand.

In 2002, approximately 248 golf courses, measured as 18-hole equivalents, opened. This num-

ber is down 13 percent over 2001 and down 38 percent from 2000, which was the 15-year peak.

However, there is some good news to be gleaned from the report. The NGF predicts development will stabilize in 2003, based on the number of courses already under construction that are expected to open this year.

The drop-off in construction

Continued on next page



First-time golf course developers Ed and Chad Fralick cut their teeth on Dark Horse Golf Club in Auburn, Calif.

Pelican Hills GC retains 'Fazio look'

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do the work. A member of Fazio's staff is on-site monitoring the work as well.

The first step in the renovation process was choosing a new type of sand. Once the three finalists were chosen, Thomas divided a bunker into thirds and filled it with the different types of sand to get an idea of how they would look.

"We looked at a lot of different sands and went out to a lot of golf courses," said Thomas. "After evaluating aesthetics, playability and penetrometer readings we finally decided on mix from West Coast Aggregate called 75/25. It is 75 percent crushed marble and 25 percent USGA tan to tone it down a little bit. Fazio didn't want the bright white out there."

Development slide

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over the last five years can be attributed to a slowdown in development of public courses, particularly high-end daily-fee courses. Development of private clubs has remained steady, averaging about 59 per year. However, the NGF said private courses as a percent of supply are expected to continue to gradually decline from 30 percent to 25 percent due to more public courses being built and conversions of private clubs to daily fee.

"The downturn had to come sooner or later," said Jim Kass,

'The downturn had to come sooner or later.'

—Jim Kass

NGF research director. "Simple economies dictate that with demand increasing only about 1.5 percent a year, development could not continue at historic levels. And while some golf course operators are hurting, there are still markets where it's appropriate to build."

NGF research shows that from 1986 to 1990, demand outpaced supply, but from 1991 to the present, the opposite occurred. The ratio of golfers to courses today is returning to 1986 levels, about 1,900 golfers per 18-hole equivalent.

The decline in new construction should be good news to many operators who have seen downward pressure on their revenue per round in the face of increased competition, the NGF said. While that pressure is not expected to decrease in the near future, the NGF expects the combination of grow-the-game efforts and a slowdown in new supply to eventually relieve that pressure. ■

sand on our faces."

Each contractor is tackling nine holes a piece, while Thomas and his crew are busily following behind collecting the old bunker sand to reuse as topdressing material.

'We wanted to maintain the character of the original design and get back the fat bunker lip.'

—Steve Thomas

"They are pulling the edges off to get back to the original paint line and doing a lot of hand work cleaning up roots and contaminated sand. We are loading up our topdressers and putting it out on

the same fairway," Thomas said. "It saves us from having to haul it away."

According to Thomas' calculations, there will be enough old bunker sand to put down a quarter-inch layer of topdressing on both courses.

Barring any weather delays, Thomas expects all 36 holes to be up and running by April 1 with all new bunkers. ■

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