



Spain's Soto Grande

*This new course, near the
Mediterranean, compares
favorably with any in U.S.*

By O. J. NOER

Spain seems to be on the threshold of launching a golf boom. There are approximately 25 courses in the country at the present time. One reason for the awakening is the increasing number of tourists who are flocking into Spain. Last year 13,000,000 visitors came to Spain. It is estimated that they spent over a billion dollars. Spain is popular because prices are reasonable and the people are friendly. The visitors come from all over Europe and America.

The coastal area of the Mediterranean, from Gibraltar east, is booming. It reminds me of Florida in the early days because of the building activity to house the visitors. There are direct flights from London, Madrid, and even Africa to Malaga. Jet flight time from London to Malaga is about 2½ hours.

There is an 18-hole course at Maibella,

(Above) Soto Grande clubhouse sets on a knoll above standard and short courses. Eventually, it will be surrounded by cottages that will house visiting golfers.

club de Gualdamina, a short drive from Malaga, on the road to Gibraltar. It was designed by a British architect who supervised the construction. Grass on the greens of this two-year old course is bent. The fairways and tees are a combination of bent, rye grass and fescue.

One of the Best

The new course at Soto Grande (translated, Grand Meadow) will be one of the very finest, as good as any in Britain or the United States. Soto Grande is located about 15 miles from Gibraltar, on the main road to that British colony. On a clear day golfers can see the rock of Gibraltar and the coast of Africa as they play the holes near the Sea.

There are an 18 hole championship and a short 9-hole course. They were designed by Robert Trent Jones who, with his staff, supervised construction. Both courses start and finish at the clubhouse, which is being built alongside the Mediterranean.

Greens on the 18-hole course average 8,000 square feet. Most of the fairways are quite wide, ranging from 60 to 80 yards. The tees have enough length so



Greens, around 8,000 feet square, at Soto Grande have been planted to Penncross. Gibraltar can be seen from this spot on a clear day.

that every hole is a challenge when played from the back. But they are a fair test for the average golfer when the markers are placed up front.

The greens on the short course are smaller, averaging about 4,500 square feet. The tees are smaller, too, but adequate. Most holes are par three, but there are several par fours.

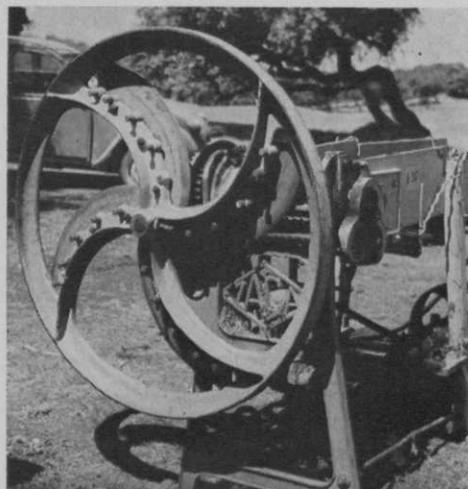
Tifton on Tees, Fairways

The tees and the fairways of both courses are Tifgreen (Tifton 328) mainly, but some Tifway (Tifton 419) has been used on a couple of fairways. A nursery was established on one fairway which provides sprigs for both courses. Planting stock for it came from the U.S.

Soto Grande is a turf pioneer, being the first in Spain to use superior vegetative types of Bermuda grass. Both kinds of Bermuda, Tifway on the several fairways, Tifgreen on the other, on all tees and the short course greens are producing outstanding turf. There is nothing to compare with them in southern Spain. The grass is dense and tight. It will be the finest playing turf in Spain and other courses will switch to it.

The greens on the 18-hole course have been seeded to Penncross bent. Once,

Senor Romero, the supt., learns the secret of summertime maintenance, the greens will be comparable to the best ones in the United States. The weather is exactly like that of southern California. Temperatures rarely exceed 90 degrees F. Humidity is not bad. It is higher when the wind comes in from the ocean. There is no rain
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Supt. at Soto Grande rigged up this machine for cutting stolons.

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lines, ignoring others. If you are buying incorrectly, you could face a big loss if prices fall in items in which you are overstocked.

2. Bad debts as a percentage of sales. This figure ordinarily should not exceed 2 or 3 per cent, or possibly in a pro shop should be lower.

3. Working capital ratio. (Current liabilities versus current assets). For example, with current liabilities of \$5,000, and current assets of \$15,000, your ratio is 3 to 1. Traditionally a 2 to 1 ratio is considered healthy. Anything less means you may have difficulty in meeting creditors' demands for payment.

4. Return on investment. (Net income for the year expressed as a percentage of net assets at the beginning of the year). This is a measure of overall profitability. It should be compared with returns in other years and possibly with other business fields.

If you pay yourself less or more than it would cost to hire a comparable pro, subtract or add back the difference to net profit before making the calculation so your answer will be realistic. For in-

stance, you pay yourself a salary of \$8,000, but it would cost \$10,000 to hire a comparable manager from the outside. Subtract the \$2,000 difference from net profit so that you'll get an honest indication of what profit you're actually making. Do the same thing (only adding back rather than subtracting) with any special expenses or allowances you allow yourself, but to which a manager wouldn't be entitled.

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during the summer so soil moisture can be controlled.

The greens on the short course have been planted to Gilgreen. Overseeding for the winter season is not complicated because winter weather is moderate. Although the formal opening is scheduled for spring, the short course should be in play now.

Has Automatic Water

Soto Grande is unique in another respect. It has a very fine completely automatic water system so that there will be

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good turf the year around.

The clubhouse is in the process of being built. There will be dual cottages for 50 guests as a starter and more when demand warrants. Each one has living quarters, bedrooms with bath and an enclosed screen porch. Guests can take a sun bath in privacy. The clubhouse and cottages will be magnificent in every respect. They will be ready for occupancy at the time of the formal opening in early spring. Soto Grande is sure to be selected as the site for some of the International matches.

Jose Banos Masden has started to build another golf course at Maibella in connection with a home real estate development. He engaged Robert Trent Jones to design and build the course. Another fine one is in prospect on an attractive site near Madrid, located beside a large body of water formed in conjunction with a dam for electric power generation.

Madrid Has Two Courses

One of the two existing courses in Madrid, Puerta de Hierro (Iron Gate), is said to have been built during the reign of one of the last kings. Henry Cotton is in the process of rebuilding and enlarging the course to 27 or 36 holes. This club

also has a polo field. The other Madrid club is Compes de Campo, which is 18 holes.

The grass on both courses is bent and there is some fescue. This is true of tees, fairways, and greens. There is a little Bermuda in the fairways, but it is not becoming the dominant grass. The probable explanation is the fact that turf receives very little fertilizer and water.

Weeds are prevalent which is to be expected with low fertility levels. Both kinds of crabgrass, knotweed and the broad leaf weeds exist in the fairways and lawns. Evidently greens have been hand weeded. The labor force includes women as well as men.

No Tired Blood Here

Jack Patroni, Apawamis (Rye, N.Y.) CC pro, who won the recent Metropolitan Open, is 57-years old. He shot an even par 284 over the Briar Hill CC course in Briar Manor, N.Y. Runnersup were Wes Ellis and Al Feminelli with 286s. Patroni, who wears a white shirt and tie while playing, birdied the 70th and 71st holes to pull away.