

Arne Van Amerongen reports from his latest port of call – Calabria in Italy

CALABRIA

A NEW GOLFING FRONTIER

Photo 1: Hole 1



Photo 2: Installation of the lake shores



Photo 3: Works on the lake are completed



I did not know this region of Italy when I arrived to oversee the construction of the nine hole course in Southern Calabria so it was a real challenge and a very gratifying experience for me.

The population of Calabria is approximately two million and the project is being built in a region with a precarious economy. The city of Reggio Calabria boasts a national airport with daily flights from Rome and Milan and a population of 180,000.

The Montechiarello golf course which brought me to the area is being built in a small village called Orti in the hinterland of Reggio and mainly due to the initiative of nine local investors.

The project is at an altitude of 750 metres with a magnificent view over Sicily. Furthermore the Straits of Messina, the Etna and the Eolie islands can all be seen from the clubhouse from where you can also see the magnificent view which

embraces the 1st hole with its artificial lake, the Calabrian coastline and the Straits of Messina (photo no.1).

One of the first problems I encountered was the recruitment of experienced personnel and related machinery. Some of the work was executed manually, as big stones were transported with wheelbarrows to the shores of one of the three artificial lakes (photo no. 2).

One of the three artificial lakes was completed after 2 weeks work and has a total surface of 5000 m² with a total volume of 25,000 m³.

Water is extremely important in this type of climate in order to maintain the turf to a high standard.

The two photographs show the 6th hole before (photo no. 4) and during construction (photo no. 5). The 6th is a Par 3 of 121 yards. Each hole was designed and integrated into the existing landscape in order to preserve a complete harmony with the surrounding environment.

It took just five months to construct the driving range, six holes and the irrigation system. As is usual in Calabria, and especially after such a lot of hard work, a break with good wine and excellent food is organised by the construction personnel

(photo no. 6). The golf resort of Montechiarello will also include tennis courts, a swimming pool, horse paddocks and a hotel which still have to be constructed.

It is just the first of a number of similar developments intends to build six new 18 hole courses in Calabria over the next few years.

The Calabrian climate allows golf to be played for 12 months in the year. Calabria could really become a new promised land for golf.

On the left, we can see Peter Harradine the Golf Course Architect who designed this course, on the right



Above: Photos 4 and 5



Architect Filippo Barbaro the Promoter of the project and in the middle Arne Van Amerongen the Project Supervisor and author of this article (photo no. 7).



Above: Photo 6 and photo 7 below

