

# Grande Lair plans to snare title as world's best

BY MARK LESLIE

The ultimate destination golf resort, a sort of Disneyland of Golf, is taking form on paper, and will be a \$300 million reality in 1992, planners say.

Don Wizeman of the U.S.-Japan Golf Association, formed two years ago to promote golf between the two countries, is coordinating the giant venture on Johns Island off the coast near Charleston, S.C.

"We're talking about a project that gives everybody involved immortality," said Wizeman. He said the Grande Lair International complex, on which ground will be broken next spring, will open with:

- four golf courses;
- a career counseling center to help in areas from sports medicine to financial management;
- the world's largest golf school, which will include two sets of practice holes (one a par 3; the other a par 4 and 5);
- a golf course maintenance and management school to teach courses from design to course management as well as study and test grasses and irrigation systems;
- a complete golf video and book library;
- a \$4-million to \$5-million state-of-the-art health and fitness facility;
- a broadcast facility to air tournaments and other golf shows worldwide in different languages;
- a tennis school and 26 tennis courts with four different surfaces, and including a stadium court;
- an equestrian center;
- a 600-unit luxury hotel, a luxury spa and a range of stores, gourmet shops and cabarets;

• a city club in downtown Charleston to serve as an embarkation and debarkation point to the island.

"We will create the ultimate golf resort," Wizeman said. "We're not in it for the real-estate income; we'll build perhaps 1,000 home sites rather than the 20,000 you might expect."

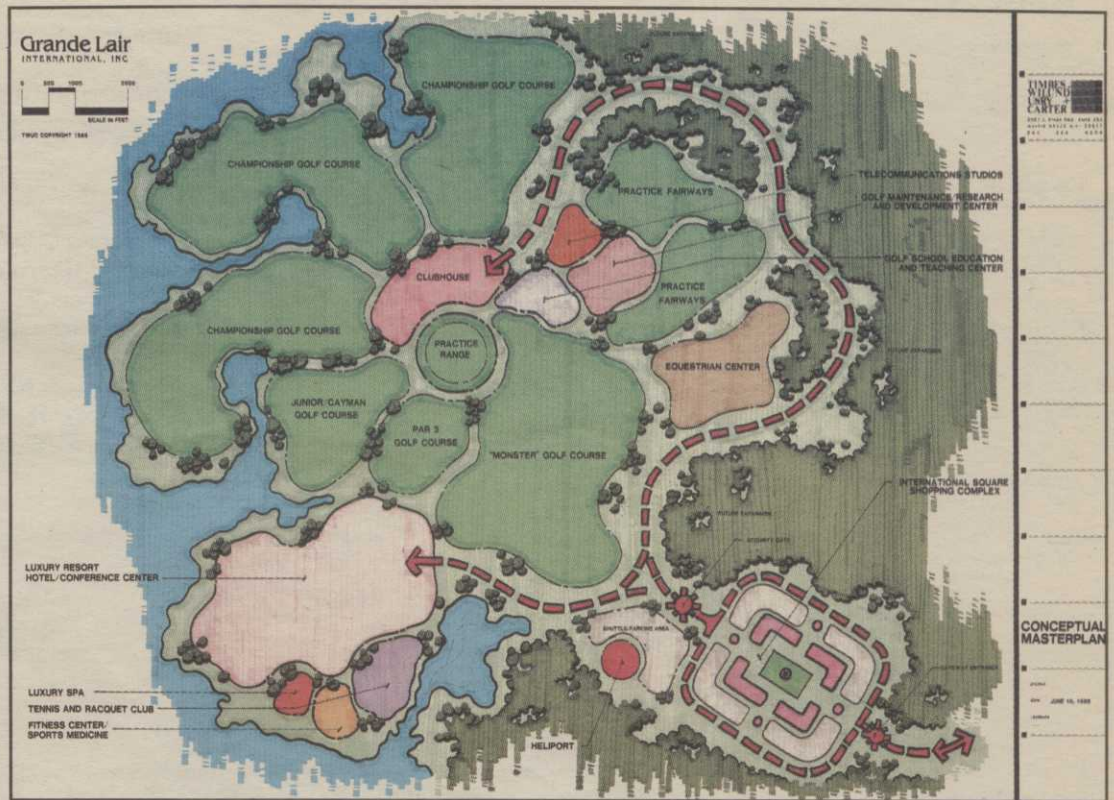
It sounds like a distance dream but Wizeman insists, "We are going after the 'Who's Who of Golf,'" and names U.S.-Japan Golf Association partners in the venture as Edward D. Stone and Associates land planning group; Timbes, Wilund, Usry and Carter building architects, the Bellamy law firm; Palm Beach Institute of Sports Medicine; and Architectural Graphics of Virginia Beach, Va.

The project will be financed 80-90 percent by a Japanese company, while Wizeman's group will handle construction, development and management. Wizeman said five Japanese firms have expressed interest in being the one company involved, and the American partners will offer the deal first-come first-serve.

The American partners have optioned 4,500 acres on Johns Island, which actually includes 11 small islands 15 miles south of Charleston. They have options on three plantations for \$50 million.

"Everything will be done on the front end. It will all be completed when we open," Wizeman said. "But we will be able to expand the hotel and add courses as needed."

"The income sources will be tremendous cash-flow-wise, from a spa to the teaching facility,



courses, hotel with food, room and beverage, cottages, corporate retreats, and leases at International Square (the shopping, restaurant, night club area)."

The complex will employ 1,600 and its advertising budget alone will be \$3 million a year, he said.

He said Economic Research Associates of San Francisco is doing a feasibility study on the project.

The cornerstone of the golf courses will be an 18-hole Monster Course designed by 18 different architects "to be the hardest course in the world."

Wizeman has solicited 60 architects to show the partners their work, and a team will pick the final 18 for the course. Those 18 will select three to be in charge of the entire course.

Three of those architects will also be signed to design an entire course, giving the complex four complete courses when it opens.

Wizeman envisions another 18 to 22 courses being built in the years ahead — one apiece by the 18 original designers as well as a Cayman course and perhaps one on which 18 golf professionals will design signature holes.

"All (the architects) we were concerned about participating, are participating," Wizeman said.

Wizeman feels golfers the world over will be drawn to the complex — if only to play the Monster Course. He said it will probably cost them more than \$300 a round and he envisions 130 golfers a day playing.

The developers haven't chosen a golf course builder yet.

But that question mark hardly puts a wrinkle on Wizeman's brow. Between now and next spring he faces a few decisions immensely more challenging.

## Jacobs firm now Greenvisions

Greenvisions is the new corporate name for the company successor to the management contracts of John Jacobs' Golf Management, headquartered in

Northbrook, Ill.

Ram Thukkaram, an Illinois businessman who recently acquired the company, is chairman and chief executive officer.

## Oregon seed firms optimistic on burning

Oregon's seed industry was picking up more support in the legislative ranks as the controversial proposed ban on field-burning continued in debate at the end of June.

A spokesman for the Oregon Fine Fescue Commission said support had grown from 31 to 35 of the 60 House members. A simple majority is needed to kill a bill, and the seed industry which depends on burning fields to purge land of disease was optimistic.

Oregon's 70 seed companies provide all U.S.-produced

ryegrass, bentgrass, and Chewings and creeping red fescue; one-half the U.S.-produced tall fescue; and about one-fourth its bluegrass.

Producers say they would have to look abroad for grass seed if an extensive field-burning ban were passed.

Yet they say those foreign countries that grow seed — like Argentina, Australia and New Zealand — do not have the quality control that the United States has to keep bothersome and noxious weeds out of the seed.

## ASPA gives grant money

The American Sod Producers Association has awarded \$15,000 to five university research projects in an attempt to determine the environmental contributions of turfgrass.

ASPA awarded grants to:

- Dr. James B. Beard of Texas A&M for his project on "the benefits of turfgrass infavorably modifying the microclimate of urban areas."

- Dr. H.D. Nieuwicz of Ohio State for his study on "fate and vertical mobility of insecticides and herbicides applied to turfgrass."

- Dr. A. Martin Petrovic of Cornell University for his study to "model the leaching of pesticides applied to turfgrass as influenced by soil type and irrigation management."

- Dr. T.L. Watschke of Penn State for his study on "the effects of turf establishment on water control."

- Dr. H.T. Wilkinson of the University of Illinois for his work on "an integrated biological control program to reduce fungicides used for the control of lawn diseases."

ASPA hopes the projects will provide better directions to sod producers and turf managers.

## Von Hagge cited for excellence

Robert von Hagge of von Hagge Design Associates, which has offices in Houston, Paris and Tokyo, has been nominated by the Comite de L'Excellence Europeenne for its prestigious "Gold Medal of European Excellence."

He is the first in his field to be so selected and is one of five finalists.

In the letter informing von Hagge of the nomination, committee vice chairman Count Arnault de Poligny told him: "The prize would be bestowed upon you in homage to your creativity and ver-

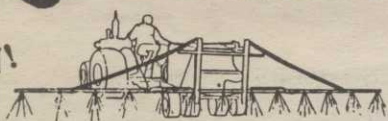
satile talents, your achievements in the golf universe, your sense of aesthetics and the know-how you brought to Europe and France to develop new golf courses."

Each year for 16 years the committee has searched worldwide for individuals and companies who exemplify the ideals of excellence, "inventiveness, rigor and dynamism, advancing toward new techniques and markets, in subtle symbiosis with a respect for inherited traditions."



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