



From wetland to country club, American architect Gary Roger Baird made magnificent use of his design skills and the construction know-how of developers of The Royal Gems Golf and Sports Complex in Bangkok, Thailand. An 11-foot-high levee needed to be built around the property and the land was drained before construction could begin on the \$100-million project. Baird said 75 laborers worked four months hand-laying the stonework in the double-tiered sand bunkers.

Photos Courtesy of Gary Roger Baird Design International, Ltd.



Wetlands areas no issue where monsoon season strikes

By Mark Leslie

BANGKOK, Thailand — Wetlands may be an environmental obstacle for golf course development in the United States, but not so in Thailand, according to architect Gary Roger Baird of Memphis, Tennessee, U.S.A.

Baird says Thailand is concerned, rather, with developers "randomly cutting into its hardwood forests."

While confrontations take place over the valued forests, wetlands abound in the monsoon region and a golf course only enhances the value of the land.

Baird was involved in a major case in point — the \$100-million Royal Gems Golf and Sports Complex in western Bangkok. Built on a site that was once mostly under

water, Royal Gems officially opened last Dec. 21 and has already hosted the Asian Women's Championship and is being hailed as perhaps the best course in Bangkok.

Baird said the site is 1-1/2 miles long and about 500 yards wide. The first phase of preparation was to build a levee three meters (10 feet) tall around the entire project. That protected the property from flooding when the monsoons hit.

The property was drained of water by 8,000-gallon-per-minute pumps placed at each corner of the site. Four to five months of tedium followed as wide-track tractors peeled off the earth a little at a time to dry it out and allow rough earthwork to be

done.

The 200-acre golf course was then built so all fairways would drain into the 40 acres of lakes within the course.

Baird says the special preparation and work paid off. The course is under consideration for World Cup play. And the rest of the development is special to behold.

Waterfalls are everywhere, he said, and

plans call for 260 homesites, four towers of condominiums, a 100-room hotel, 110-square-foot clubhouse, two restaurants, an observatory tower, conference center with library, and a ballroom that seats 350.

For athletes, the project boasts a 100-meter pool, jogging track, aerobics center, tennis courts, snooker, billiards, and much more, including 24-hour medical aid.

Inexperience means odd cures

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that would reduce chemical use and justify less intensive pesticide monitoring.

"The biggest concern is to help the Guam EPA identify and recognize all the potential

chemical use mitigation practices available to reduce chemical use, then cut the monitoring requirements accordingly for the developers who implement the reduced chemical use practices," Noble said.

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