

European report maps state of golf in region

British research company releases wide-ranging study on golfers and facilities

LONDON — Almost 250 new golf courses opened in Europe during 1990, more than half of them in France (73 courses) and the British Isles (59 courses), according to European Golf Facilities 1991, a report published in London by DRT International.

The report states that in 1991, the British Isles ranked first, with 67 new courses out of an anticipated 240; France and Sweden were second and third with 40 and 35 new courses, respectively.

At the beginning of 1991, there were 3,678 golf courses in Europe. About 60 percent of these facilities are located in the British Isles, where there is one 18-hole course to every 26,600 people. Across Europe, the ratio is one 18-hole course per 112,000 inhabitants.

"In order to increase the level of supply across Europe to a level comparable with the British Isles, an additional 10,200 golf courses would need to be developed," said Graham Wason, a partner at Greene Belfied-Smith, DRT International's Travel and Leisure Division. "To justify this level of development, a huge increase in the number of people taking up golf, about 5 million new golfers, would be required."

Wason said this would be equivalent to more than a doubling the number of registered golfers. While this is unlikely in the short term, it illustrates that despite the apparent boom in the golf industry, Europe generally has a long way to go before it catches up with the British Isles.

"Many new golf courses have been developed without a proper analysis of competitive supply and potential demand," Wason said. "The number of golf courses advertised for sale is indicative of the problems encountered as a result of this, and of the need for a pan-European perspective on golf supply."

European Golf Facilities is an 80-page report providing a detailed description of golf supply in 20 European countries. Some highlights of the report:

- There are 3,678 golf facilities in Europe, accounting for a total of 52,500 holes.
- Scotland enjoys the highest level of golf supply in Europe with one 18-hole course per 13,000 inhabitants.
- At the other end of the spectrum is Yugoslavia, with an average of one course per 15 million inhabitants.
- On average, there are 18 holes of golf for every 112,000 Europeans versus 18 holes per 23,000 people in the United States.
- The areas outside the British Isles with the highest level of supply are either around major cities

such as Paris, Lisbon and Hamburg, or in traditional golf-tourism destinations such as the Algarve, Normandy and the Costa del Sol.

• The British Isles' golf facilities are significantly older than those in the rest of Europe. The average age is 75 years-plus. However, in counties where a high proportion of the courses are new, such as Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, the average age is much lower.

The median price of an 18-hole round of golf in Europe is 19 ECU (UK£ 13.30). Switzerland charges the highest greens fees, with a median price of 28 ECU (UK£ 19.60). The cheapest golf can be found in Scotland and Ireland, where the median price is 10 ECU (UK£ 7.00).

The report provides the following data for each European country:

- A map illustrating the con-

centration of supply according to the administrative regions (e.g. counties in Britain, departments in France).

• Statistics related to each administrative region, including:

- Number of facilities
- Number of holes
- Ranked access in country and Europe
- Average prices
- Age of facilities
- Classification of facilities

Foster signs on for two projects

Recently establishing his own design firm, Keith Foster has two projects that were set to begin construction in mid-February.

Pebble Creek is part of Robson Communities new master-planned community, west of Phoenix, Ariz. The second course is North Salt Lake City's (Utah) Municipal Golf Course.

The firm has also been retained to design courses in the Bullhead City/Laughlin, Nev., area, Missouri and California.

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Copies available

Copies of the survey are available for \$220 from Joe Lee, DRT International, Peterborough Court, 133 Fleet St., London EC4A 2TR.