

World Woods: A destination waiting for a resort

By MARK LESLIE

HOMOSASSA, Fla. — World Woods Golf Club, featuring 45 holes and unique "practice park" designed by Tom Fazio, opened for play in this central Florida town on March 1 — a destination waiting for a resort.

"It's as high-quality golf as you can find anywhere," said Fazio. He termed it as the same caliber golf as Black Diamond, Lake Nona and John's Island West — three other Fazio facilities in Florida that have gained renown the last few years.

The owner, Interfive Corp., is exploring the possibility of building a hotel and other sorts of lodging, according to Mark Kizziar, vice president of Western Golf Properties, which is managing the facility.

"As we look at the component parts that are there, as well as those being planned for the future, the niche that that facility has to fit into is a destination resort."

Some firms have already expressed a "sincere interest [in building lodging] because of the quality of the property," Kizziar said, adding that another three golf courses are also on the drawing board.

Meanwhile, Western Golf Properties President Joe Black is excited about the golf that is already in the ground.

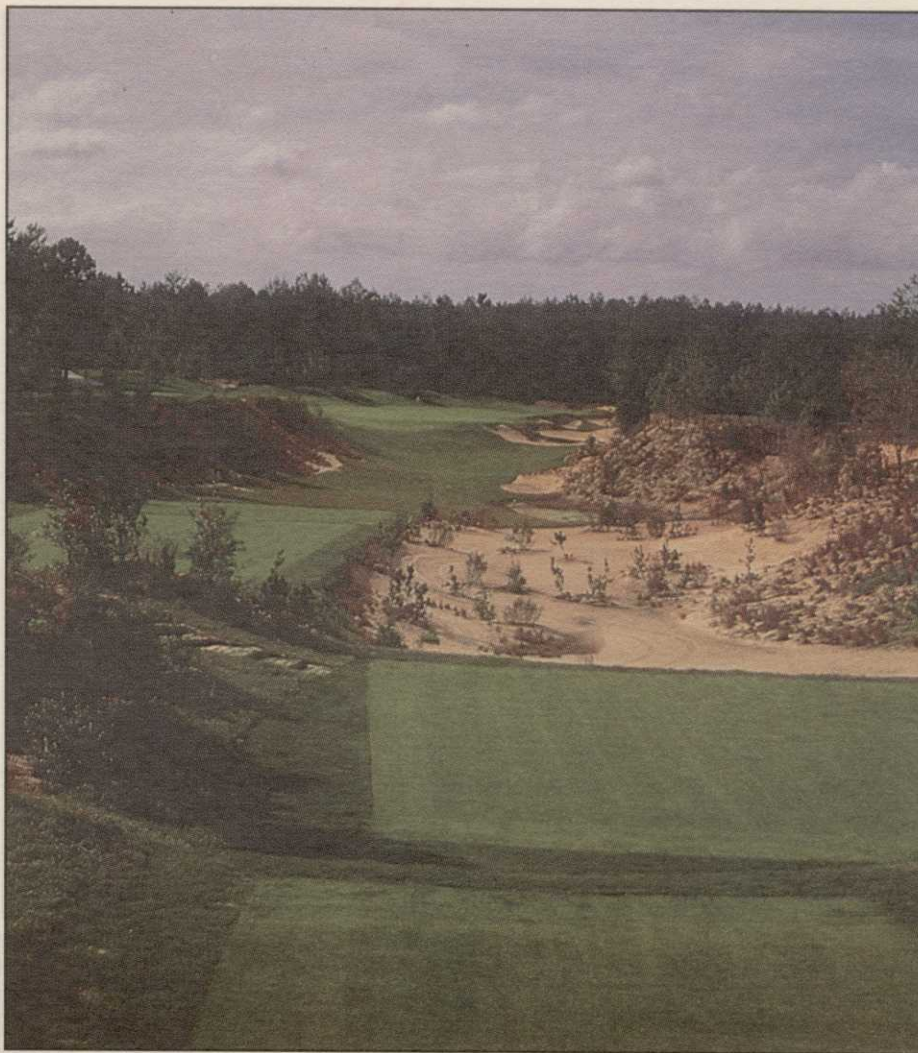
"World Woods is like having Augusta and Pine Valley and the finest practice facility in the world in the same location," he said.

World Woods consists of the 6,902-yard Pine Barrens Golf Course, 6,985-yard Rolling Oaks Golf Course, a nine-hole short course, 22-acre, four-sided practice range flanked by par-3, -4 and -5 practice holes, and a two-acre putting course.

Fazio used a property with 40-foot elevation changes, century-old trees and natural foliage, and created "two distinctive-style golf courses," he said.

"The Pine Barrens is all pine trees and sand," Fazio said. "The style is a combination of the sand hills of North Carolina — the kind of tree formation and sand at Pinehurst — and Pine Valley-Cypress Point sand-dune areas."

Rolling Oaks Golf Course, he said, is "much more manicured in terms of grasses, more formal landscaping — a combination of [the feel of] Jupiter Hills and Augusta National in terms of high-intense maintenance: that formal golf course look, with



The Pine Barrens course at World Woods.

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— Mark Kizziar, v-p
Western Golf Properties

oak trees and a lot of deciduous trees throughout the property."

Fazio said any one of the nine holes on the short course "could fit on any golf course in America. Any one is grand, and has well-formed and shaped holes with elevation change and vegetation.

The practice holes are reminiscent of the long, strong golf holes on the property.

The 20-acre "practice park" is complete with target greens and chipping greens shaped into the trees, with bunkers.

"You can hit into the greens based on the sun and winds," Fazio said.

The 36-hole putting course covers 70,000 square feet and boasts fingers and ears and chipping areas, the likes of which Fazio said he has "never done this on this scale."

First certified course builders announced

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — The Golf Course Builders Association of America has announced its first group of certified golf course builders.

GCBA Executive Vice President Phil Arnold said the designation has been earned by Paul Clute & Associates of Hartland, Mich.; Golf Development Construction of Louisville, Ky.; Irvin Construction of Fisherville, Ky.; Moore Golf of Culpeper, Va.; Pierman Golf Co. of North Palm Beach, Fla.; and Wadsworth Construction Co. of Plainfield, Ill.

"I believe it's very important that the association identify competent and experienced golf course construction firms. Over time, I believe this certification program will be the standard by which all golf course builders will be judged," Arnold said.

Another 19 companies are involved in the process. It includes completing an application covering the company's history and past projects, obtaining letters of reference from a variety of people such as course superintendents, irrigation designers, architects, engineers, owner/developers, and financial institutions.

When all paperwork has been submitted, a company representative takes the certification examination, which consists of 100 multiple-choice questions on golf course construction.

The exam is offered twice a year.

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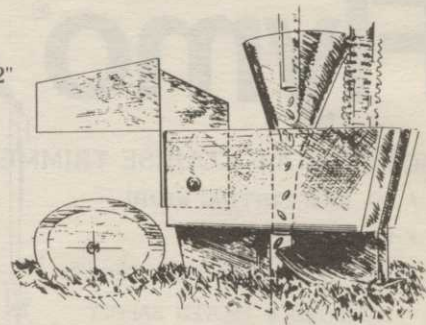
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