

First golf course opens in tiny Asian nation of Macau

By ROBERT GLUCKSMAN

MACAU — The first and only golf club in this 6-square-mile Portuguese enclave of 500,000 people opened for play in late January.

Perched on a bluff overlooking Hac Sa cove, the new Macau Golf & Country Club takes advantage of the territory's sweeping views over long sections of the Pearl River delta and the South China Sea.

Conceived by Dr. Stanley Ho, the commercial force behind

Macau's development, the project has been a decade in planning and nearly three years in construction.

The 6,511-yard, par-71 course is an Isao Aoki design. The front nine is open and the back nine will be playable in early summer. Club Corporation of Asia will manage the club under a 10-year contract. A 206-room Westin hotel and yet-to-be-approved casino are part of the complex.

The course is demanding and very narrow.

Superintendent Barry Mueller speaks of it as "almost a target course. You need to aim for specific spots on the fairways rather than trying to hit it as far as you can."

Most regular-distance landing zones feature bunkers, cliffs, trees and water hazards. Wind is a constant hazard, sometimes even while putting. Mueller expects the pro shop to do a brisk ball business.

Constant elevation changes and roll, are prominent features. The

3rd hole is 90 meters above sea level while the 18th runs just back from the beach.

Golfers, so far, have preferred to walk (with caddies) rather than use carts. Mueller expects that will change, pointing out that the soon-to-open back nine involves a lot more clambering up and down the peninsula's hills and cliffs.

The Bermudagrass looks strong, especially encouraging given the decomposed granite dominating the South China soil. Some young trees, though, have

had difficulty with the cool winter winds.

Water should not be a problem with rain water, city water and effluent readily available.

Fees at Macau will be somewhat lower than Hong Kong clubs, with memberships running around US\$90,000. Current membership stands at 750.

The course will be closed to the public, with limited play for hotel guests.

Greens fees range from US\$80-100.

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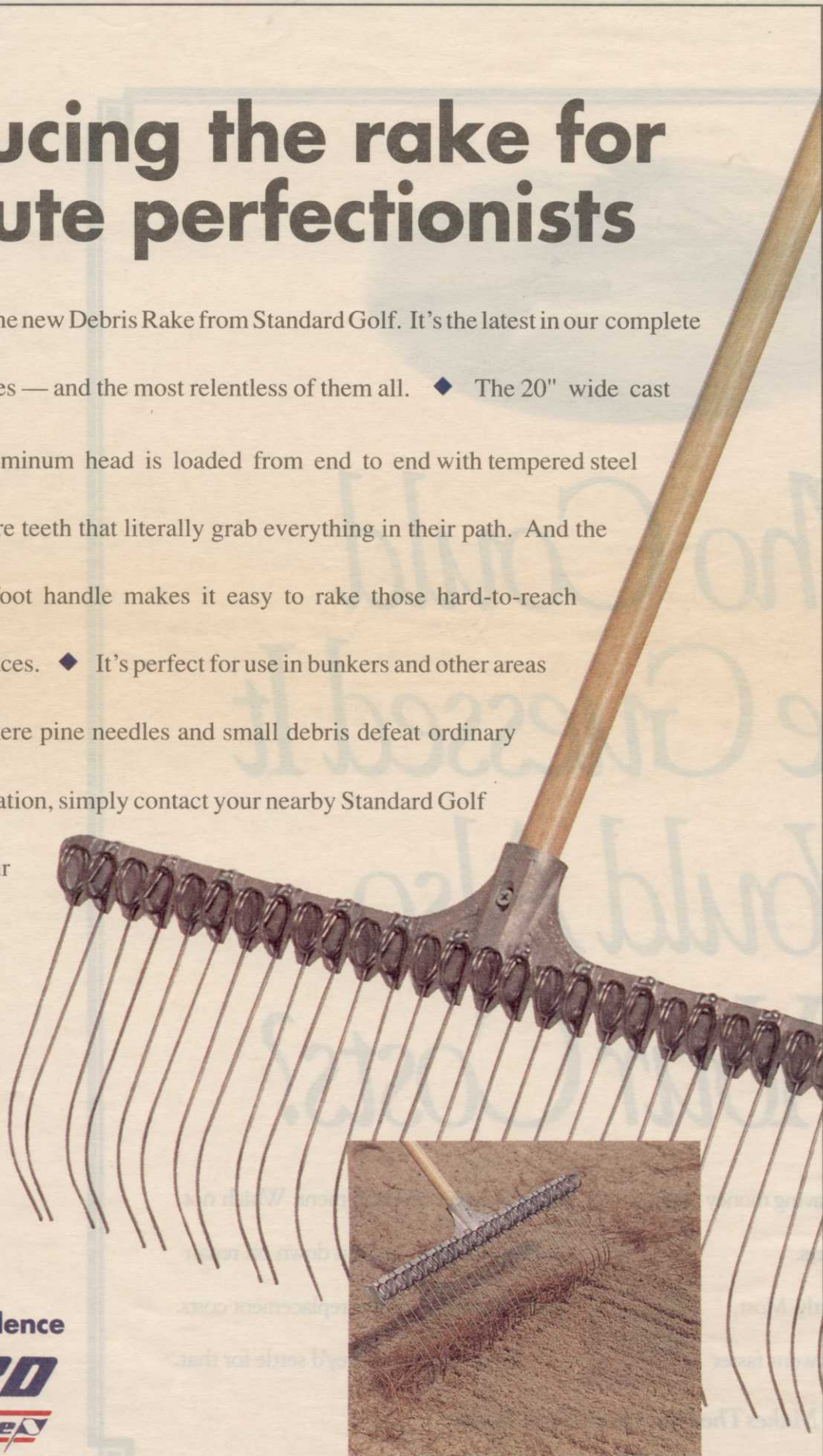
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CIRCLE #106

Neighbor files suit against La. club

BOCARATON, Fla. — Suzanne Fries is angry because her home is on the third hole of a busy golf course and is filing a lawsuit to require the owner to move the third tee.

Fries thought it would be great to have her property abutting Boca Raton Executive Country Club's 3rd hole. But after she learned that up to 50 balls visited her property daily, she changed her mind.

She told the *Boca Raton News*: "It's beyond the normal course of what you'd expect living next to a golf course. The golfers drive their carts into our backyard and mow down our trees and bushes."

The suit states: "The plaintiffs' entire backyard, including the pool, is rendered useless because of the danger of being struck by a golf ball. Peter Fries has been struck by golf balls on two occasions."

Practice range gets nod from county

TURLOCK, Calif. — The Merced County Planning Commission recently approved Robert and Eileen Warnke's proposal to build a driving range just north of Highway 99.

The Warnkes hope the range will be open for business this summer. It will be located on 13 acres of property they own.

The new lighted facility will include a net-enclosed, 300-foot driving range; a shorter range for iron practice complete with greens; a variety of putting greens; and four chipping greens for sand.

Corrections

Because of an editing error, an author's name was spelled incorrectly in the March edition of *Golf Course News*. The byline atop the story on page 20 should have read, "By David Thrailkill."

♦ ♦ ♦

A newly planned course listing in the February issue incorrectly listed Tom Rollins as the contact for the Twin Hollow Golf Course in St. Louis. The contact should be Bill Cunningham at 314-878-6252.