

From China to N. America, Shark making his mark on design field

By HAL PHILLIPS

LIVERMORE, Calif. — In a year when his playing fortunes included a vindicating British Open title and another crushing playoff loss in the PGA, Greg Norman's architectural cup overfloweth.

Backed by the handling of International Management Group and the sheer force of its principal personality, Greg Norman Design has embarked on its first North American project here to complement its 16 courses in planning or under construction

in Asia-Pacific, including three in his native Australia.

The course at the Wentz Bros. Vineyard here will be an upscale, public 18 nestled in the wine country 45 miles south of San Francisco. According to Chris Roderick, Norman's agent at IMG, construction at Wentz Bros. will begin this spring.

All told, Norman and design partner Bob Harrison have 18 courses completed and 25 more under contract worldwide. And while he is aggressively pursuing



Greg Norman

Design's first contract in golf's largest market, the United States.

Sticklers may remember that Norman played a role in two North American designs previous to the

contracts in Mexico, the Caribbean, South America and Europe, the Wentz Bros. project is Greg Norman

Wentz Bros. project. With help from veteran architect Ted Robinson, Norman has received design credit for the Experience at Keole on the Hawaiian Island of Lanai and the Royal Melbourne course outside Chicago. However, Norman and Harrison have since formed Greg Norman Design. To go with its first North American project, the firm has opened a sales and marketing office in Singapore to support the home office in Sydney, where design staff will continue

to operate.

The new sales and marketing branch has been busy. Norman's well-publicized trip to his newly completed project in Xiamen, China, last June was a public relations coup, as the affable Aussie charmed the locals with his enthusiasm for Chinese golf and willingness to tote his own baggage—including a consignment of spirits presumably provided by sponsor Johnnie Walker.

"I thought he would be concerned because he was used to flying first class," United Distillers Brand Controller Steve Foxcroft told the China Business Review. "Not at all. He helped me bring the crates of food and champagne onto the plane. He was really, really relaxed."

While the Kai Kou GC project in Xiamen is in the ground (Norman played a benefit exhibition round there in June), the as-yet-completed Hau Na CC 18 in Tianjin and future Chinese developments in general are potentially affected by the recent government crackdown on land speculation. However, Norman Design possesses a diversified portfolio. Seven Asia-Pacific nations are sites of Norman projects, including five in Indonesia.

Before Norman was involved in golf course architecture, he vigorously maintained he had no interest in the game's design side. After consulting to the Lanai project he changed his mind and, from all indications, hasn't looked back.

Oklahomans play Heckenkemper's Earlywine design

OKLAHOMACITY, Okla. — The newly constructed Earlywine Golf Course held its grand opening ceremony on Oct. 1, with Director of Golf Mike Smiley and Jim Hart, Earlywine's head superintendent, presiding.

Designed by Randy Heckenkemper, president of Planning Design Group of Tulsa, Okla., and constructed by Golf Works, Inc. of Austin, Texas, Earlywine is an upscale municipal course. The par-72 track, constructed for the Oklahoma City Golf Commission, portrays a design style that reflects traditional values while maintaining the ecological systems of the site.

With four to six tees per hole, the course can be played from 5,200 to 6,780 yards. Putting greens, averaging 6,500 square feet, consist of Pennlinks Bentgrass and have been constructed in strict accordance with U.S.G.A. recommendations. The balance of the golf course has been planted with Bermudagrass, fescue and ryegrass.

Earlywine is one of four golf facilities under the direction of the Oklahoma City Golf Commission. Planning Design Group is involved in renovation of two other city facilities.



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