

## Signature International enters golf market

ORLANDO, Fla. — Real estate developers and golf industry executives formed Signature International LP, which is being backed by the Yale University Endowment Fund, to acquire and develop real estate.

The new company acquired Harbor Hills, a 2500-acre master-planned community, north of Orlando, Fla.

Signature International LP is a limited partnership with Yale University, Dev.-Con (a Toronto, Canada-based development company) and three managing principals. The three managing principals are President and Chief Executive Officer F. Christopher Ansley, who is also CEO of Dev-Con, which during the last 15 years completed almost \$1 billion of real estate

development; Peter C. Ansley, a Canadian businessman; and Adam Solomon, formerly managing director at E.M. Warburg, Pincus and Co. The principals are also SI partners.

The partners already own several resort and residential properties, including Starr Pass, a master-planned community in Tucson, Ariz., St. James Place, a time-share resort in Beaver Creek, Colo. and Hans Lollock Island in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Harbor Hills is being developed as a master-planned community and destination resort. It includes an 18-hole golf course designed by Lloyd Clifton, an upscale country club with formal restaurant and grill, a complete tennis facility and a fitness center.

"The indigenous wildlife is a most distinctive aspect of the property. We are already working with the World Wildlife organization to enhance and protect our "Harbor Hills bird sanctuary," said Christopher Ansley.

Don Vance was appointed general manager of Harbor Hills Country Club. Vance has 24 years of experience in the golf industry and was most recently director of management services at Arnold Palmer Golf Management Company. Vance also serves as a director of operations for the Signature Golf International subsidiary.

Signature International, L.P. has offices in Toronto and Orlando.

## AGC takes control at historic Hershey CC

American Golf Country Clubs (AGCC), a division of American Golf Corp. (AGC), has taken over management of The Hershey Country Club. National Golf Properties recently purchased the property and turned management over to AGCC. AGCC operates 32 private country clubs in the United States and United Kingdom.

Hershey CC includes the award-winning East and West courses as well as Hershey Parkview Golf Course. The West Course is hosted its 20th Ladies Professional Golf Association Keystone Open in mid-May. It also hosted the 1940 PGA Championship.

## Glasser on media

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ply want to announce upcoming activities, let the media know. Invite them out for complimentary golf. Meet them in person and introduce them to your staff. Actively pursue their support.

Group business should be vigorously pursued since it has the greatest potential for dollars spent per golfer. Groups of hotel conventioners, corporate managers, employee association members, civic organizations, charitable institutions and other organizations can be a boon to your operation.

You can promote meeting facilities, catering functions, golf clinics and award ceremonies to complement a day of golf. Ideally, you can hold a group function where the participants spend a full day enjoying all the profit centers at your facility.

Many facilities will designate a staff person whose sole responsibility is soliciting group business. At Marriott's Camelback Golf Club in Scottsdale, Ariz., we made an assistant pro the group meeting coordinator and isolated him from the rest of the business, leaving him to concentrate on coordinating group functions and tournaments.

He met with hotel managers and solicited golf business from their operations. We even provided bus transportation. Not only resorts, but regular daily-fee operations should also consider designating a group business coordinator.

At Camelback, we rotated the position every year among the assistant pros. Many of them went on to very successful careers. Chuck Eade is now director of golf at Springhouse Golf Club at the Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tenn. Tony Austin is golf director at Marriott's Orlando World Center and was recently named the PGA's National Merchandiser of the Year. Claye Atcheson is national director of golf operations and business development for Marriott Golf.

Consider forming alliances, particularly in more-isolated markets, with other area facilities. The highly successful Golf Holiday program at Myrtle Beach, S.C., is a good example.

You can pool resources to advertise special packages or simply promote opportunities in your area. Many regions of the country have statewide or citywide promotions with participating facilities allowing discounted golf and other privileges for members of associations, or to benefit charities.

Develop your brochures and other promotional materials — such as scorecards, yardage guides, golf school programs — as early as possible in the construction process. During construction, your representatives should be knocking on doors, meeting corporate officers, hotel managers and tourist bureaus. Speak at civic group meetings to communicate what you are developing and how you can cater to the golfing public.

Repeat business depends on the experience you provide. If it exceeds the golfer's expectations, you have taken a giant step toward developing a regular customer. You must duplicate this experience at every future visit.

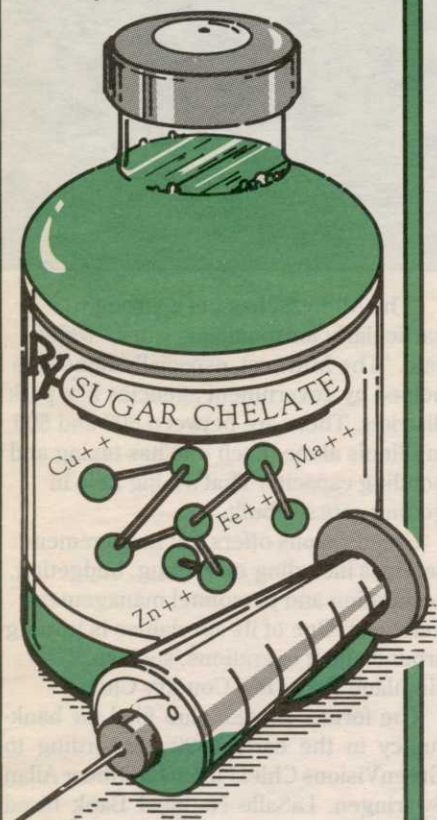
To encourage repeat business, develop a customer mailing list. Use it to target direct mail or newsletters to announce special promotions and upcoming events. Send out special invitations for functions, tournaments and announcements.

The success of any daily-fee golf facility depends on aggressive marketing. Getting the word out to potential customers means using the media, implementing a group solicitation strategy and cultivating repeat business.

Joe Glasser is president of ACE Consultants, a development and management consultant business in Colorado Springs, Colo. Glasser previously spent 14 years as a golf professional and executive with Marriott Hotels and Resorts.

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