

## George's flagship, The Colonial, opens

By MARK LESLIE

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. — The first daily-fee course in the area will open the end of March or early April, leading the charge in the new golf boom here.

The Colonial Golf Course, designed by Lester George with PGA Tour pro Robert Wrenn, is pure golf, with no housing.

"It's my flagship," said George, of Richmond. "I've been waiting for three years for it. I do very detailed drawings of every hole, and we hit 99 percent of what I wanted."

The Colonial is Wrenn's first design involvement, and he made 50 to 75 visits to the site, flagging clearing limits and "getting stuck up to my waist in mud," he said.

"Robert was an extra set of eyes," George said. "We got a very realistic feel for the golf course while building it. We got some ideas that improved the course during construction."

Set 42 feet above sea level and boasting high ridges with deep ravines, the site afforded "absolutely perfect transitional golf terrain," George said.

"It could be called The Natural, not The Colonial," he said. "We moved less than 100,000 yards of dirt on 21 holes, which includes a three-hole practice loop."

"The key on that golf course," Wrenn said, "is for golfers to play from the correct set of tees. If they do so, they should enjoy the course and play to their handicap. But because of the natural terrain and forced carries (even though those carries are only 75 yards), if you play from the wrong tees it will stretch you."

George said the project could be used as a case study for golf development in Chesapeake Bay. Approximately 5,000 feet of the property are on a tidal marsh in the bay. Three holes required exceptions from the local wetlands board, and a half dozen state and federal agencies reviewed the plans. Also, a three-acre pond was built and the course pumps from Mill Creek.

Set on 210 acres, the course covers 4,579 to 6,908 yards over five sets of tees.

The facility boasts a practice area, teaching center and complete clubhouse.

Asked if he is going to get more involved in course design, Wrenn said: "I've been doodling holes since grade school. I've enjoyed it and enjoyed working with Lester. The problem is twofold: I must figure out my career path, how much I want to play and to stay at home with the family; and how much demand there will be for my design services. I can't jump into another career if there is not enough demand. I'm in a very critical time in my playing career."

He missed qualifying school

cut by one shot, and most likely will devote 1995 to the Nike Tour, he said, adding: "If I don't want to pursue Nike, I can announce with ESPN. If I do that in conjunction with work with Lester, I can change career paths. But I feel I'm playing well and don't want to give it up."

In stark contrast, George is designing Golf Parks New Braunfels, a public executive-length track in New Braunfels, Texas, a resort town known for

its water parks.

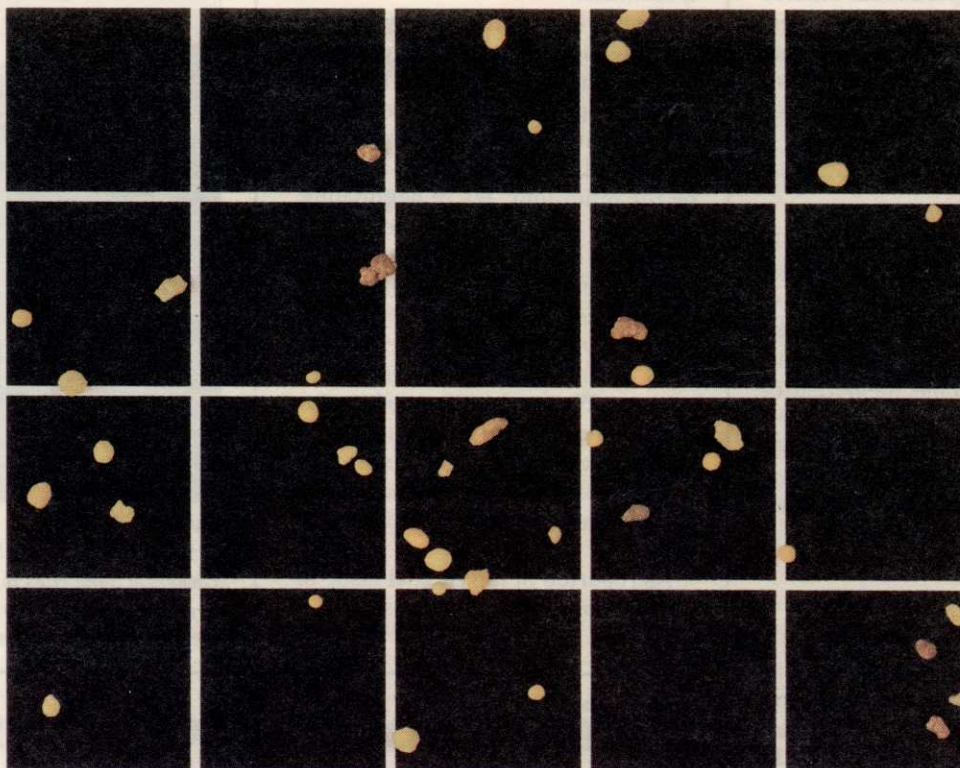
"It only has about four feet of elevation," George said. "It's flat as a board and has one tree. We have a very blank easel."

To liven it up, builders will move a lot of dirt, build 10 acres of lakes and plant exotic prairie grasses and mesquite and hackberry trees.

Developer Rob Puetz of Austin intends to build four or five executive courses at various sites if the New Braunfels project proves successful.



The Colonial could be called The Natural, say Lester George and Robert Wrenn.



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