

Land of Bible targets golf

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villages, golf school, water sports, hiking and horse-riding trails, and study centers on nature, archaeology and history.

• And another kibbutz, gifted with a beautiful piece of property west of Jerusalem, may also be interested, McLoughlin said from his McLoughlin Group offices in Plainville, N.Y.

These all join the only existing facility, Caesaria Golf Club, a private club built on the Mediterranean between Haifa and Tel Aviv in 1961.

"Clearly, there is a need," McLoughlin said. "But the five [planned] courses in Elat don't address the need for golf in Israel. Elat is to Tel Aviv, for instance, as the Florida Keys are to Boston. The Elat courses won't serve the everyday needs of the country of Israel."

A Kibbutz Gadot leader, Haim Milrad, said: "The demand for new golf courses in Israel is larger than what the government can allocate. At this time, there is no final decision as to whom the government will support."

The one course at Gadot is not enough to convince the general tourism community to add golf to its attractions, McLoughlin said. "Ninety-five percent of the Christians and Jews traveling to Israel are going for religious purposes — not to play golf," he said. "But all the tour operators could just add on golf [to their portfolios] and start attracting a wider group."

"You should be talking about three to five courses north of the line from Tel Aviv and Jerusalem," McLoughlin said. "It's what I call 'critical mass.' If there could be a course in Gadot, another at the other kibbutz and if the government or someone else would make \$500,000 available to upgrade Caesaria Golf Club and make it accessible to the public, that would be a beginning. Then, with

all the business between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, it [golf development] would happen."

In addition to tourists, McLoughlin believes resident Israelis "would take readily to the game."

Kibbutz leaders consider Tel Aviv residents "a huge weekend market," Dye said. "The [Kibbutz Gadot area] is cooler, and is a place to get out of the city. They also have the opportunity to bring in foreigners."

The courses in Elat, which is being developed as an international resort area, should do very well, McLoughlin said. "For Europeans, there are few pure resorts to go to during the winter. Besides the Canary Islands, which are booked solid, Europeans have to go to Asia, or the United States."

Construction on the Player-designed course in Elat could begin as soon as September, said design associate Christian Robinson from Player's South African office. "We're just working on [contract] semantics," he said.

Robinson said Elat Golf Course, developed by an Israel-based company, will be a desert-style 18-hole championship-caliber track.

"It has been delayed by a mixture of money and political problems," he said. "It costs about \$3.5 million in U.S. money to build a golf course these days. And that's just the course. They have to get a hotel chain behind the project."

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Meanwhile, Kibbutz Gadot may be indicative of other kibbutzim. Where in the 1950s there were 1,200 of the communities in Israel, today they number less than 300. Each kibbutz has to economically support itself and its families.

Kibbutz Gadot farms and operates a plastics factory, but its ruling council decided to build a 1,000-room hotel-villas complex to attract tourist money. The project hasn't started yet, but McLoughlin said he has obtained enough support from Jewish friends in New York to pay for two \$6 million courses.

Public golf in D.C.? At Augustine, yes

STAFFORD, Va. — The Washington, D.C. area's newest golf facility, Augustine Golf Club, an 18-hole Rick Jacobson-designed course, has opened for public play.

The Augustine Golf Club is the centerpiece of the Augustine community, which is under construction. The residential community will include 352 single-family homes developed by the Michael T. Rose Cos. of Laurel, Md.

Jacobson designed the golf course to blend with the character of Stafford County, and to harmonize with the area's topography and natural surroundings. The course was built by Wadsworth Golf Construction Co.

"Our firm's design philosophy favors subtlety and detail to create courses that are aesthetically pleas-

ing, playable by a diverse golfer profile and challenging," said Jacobson of his Libertyville, Ill., firm. "We were given the flexibility to design a course which blends aesthetically with the existing landscape yet is cognizant of the residential community that borders it. A win-win situation for everyone — the public golfer, the community and the developer."

The course design incorporated two five-acre man made lakes and 19 acres of wetlands to help create natural wildlife corridors linking the undisturbed open-space areas.

Superintendent Rick Owens is confident the Augustine golf course will meet criteria for the New York Audubon Society Golf Course Sanctuary program.

PGA Reserve tracks near opening

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course is a possibility at the facility under Senior Director of Operations Marty Kavanaugh.

"The North Course is in a denser, forested area," Fazio said. "It has tighter driving areas because of the tree cover. From its form, shape and contour, it has quite a bit of roll and elevation change. It's more of a classic-style look in its shapes and form of bunkers."

On the other hand, the South Course is "substantially different," he said. "It's larger and wider and grander in scale. It's more of a '90s-looking course... It contains bolder, steeper slopes, and it is longer because of the bodies of water and the variety of features we put into it. Creating lake areas gave us more dirt and an opportunity to form more contours, relief and elevation change."

"We've buffered the lakes and play areas with multiple shapes and forms of bunkers — long, undulating and with more use of sand and more visual impact."

"It will look a lot harder, stronger and difficult than the North Course, but in actuality it probably won't be more than one shot per side more difficult."

What pressure is there from having, in effect, 14,000 golf professionals as a client?

"Knowing it's the PGA of America and the club pros will be coming there, obviously strength and quality is something you consider for that level of player," Fazio said. "But we always start with designing a course for the best players in the world as well as taking into account that lots of different golfers will play it..."

"I feel comfortable it will fit in with any golf course we've done."

He added that the biggest challenge was "to match the quality of what the PGA of America is all about. It's a big, quality organization, and each member is proud of it. They themselves are coming from great golf courses. We will be judged by them."

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