

# Current Philippine development mirrors other boom countries

By MARK LESLIE

MANILA, Philippines — Hot. Hot. Hot. This island nation is busting with new golf course construction. If anyone thought for a moment that The Philippines had enough golf courses when The Orchard Golf and Country Club opened courses designed by Arnold Palmer and Gary Player to rave reviews, consider this: More than two dozen courses are under construction or in planning at this moment.

"The Philippines is our most

active market at the moment," said Mike Rielly, international vice president of International Management Group (IMG) which represents many Tour professionals. "We have announced 12 new projects there in the past 12 months, three or four of which are Arnold Palmer designs... Palmer and Gary Player remain very active, with Nick Faldo, Bernhard Langer and Isao Aoki spending more and more time with golf course design."

Add to the mix six more being designed by Jack Nicklaus, two more by Robert Trent Jones Jr., another two by J. Michael Poellot, and others by Ron Fream of Golfplan, Fred Couples and Tom Weiskopf.

The area south of Manila and Cebu, one of the nation's most southerly islands — offering cooler temperatures because of their elevation — especially are drawing golfing tourists from Japan, Taiwan, Singapore — even The Philippines itself.

"It is a hotbed of activity," said Steve Schroeder, a vice president with RTJII International. "The driving force is good weather, good sites and a cheap cost of living for people on vacation. Besides the two courses we have under construction, we are negotiating another one south of Manila. When these are all built, RTJ will have 10 courses in The Philippines."

A rundown of work in progress shows:

- Nicklaus and son Jack II

have three courses under construction and three in the design phase — all 18-hole tracks. Being built are Antipolo in Manila, Liloan in Cebu and Trece Martires in the Province of Cavite. The others: Cagayan D'Or in Mindano, Looc Cove on the Island of Luzan and Laurel Batangas in Tagatay City.

- RTJ is building Pueblo de Oro in Mindanao, a small island south of Manila, and Puerto Azul, an hour outside Manila on the western coast. Owned by Regatta Properties of Manila, Pueblo de Oro is an 18-hole private country club and residential community on roughly 370 acres. Under construction now, it is expected to open in 1997.

The Jones course at Puerto Azul will be its second 18. The property is a major resort area in a valley with some coastline.

- Poellot's JMP Golf Course Design is building a 27-hole course at Mount Malarayat Resort, a golf course community in Lipa City an hour south of Manila. The first nine holes, and possibly 18, are expected to open in December, while the third nine should open in December 1997. Bob Moore of JMP said it will be a private membership course with access to resort guests.

A JMP project under planning is on Cebu, straddling the island's central mountain range and boasting dramatic views of the ocean both to the east and west. Another 27-hole project, it will break ground this year with a projected 1998 opening.

Active Realty is developing both JMP projects.

- Weiskopf has been given the charge of building the best 18-hole course in The Philippines. A group of Filipino businessmen bought the property 20 miles south of Manila for a by-invitation-only country club, with limited housing.

Senior designer Dave Porter said a practice range will be built this spring before the rainy season, and when construction restarts, sod from the range will be available. A late 1997-early 1998 opening is envisioned. A major river borders the property, posing dramatic drop-offs, and several minor creeks and streams cross the property, Porter said.

- In Carmona, south of Manila, Fream has designed the first 18 holes of a country club-meeting center resort and residential community that will include a Shangri-La hotel and more than 2,000 homes. A third nine holes will become a daily-fee track, using an otherwise unusable landfill site somewhat apart from the 18-hole course.

- Palmer Course Design has two courses under contract, but not yet under construction, and is negotiating on three more.

- Player has signed an agree-

Continued on next page

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The 13th green and sweeping 14th fairway behind it exhibit the dramatic qualities at Golden Pebble Beach, an 18-hole track in Dalian, China, designed by Peter L.H. Thompson of San Rafael, Calif.

## Asians building to meet demand

Continued from page 37

best maintained golf course — is coordinating the final phase construction. A 1996 opening is planned.

MINDANAO, The Philippines — Construction is set to begin on a pair of Robert Trent Jones Jr.-designed projects, one here on the archipelago, the other in the People's Republic of China.

Routing plans have been completed and building should commence by early 1996 here on Cagayan de Oro. The 18-hole resort is located near the airport on the island of Mindanao south of Manila. Regatta Properties of Manila is the developer. Plans are to open the golf facility in late 1997.

Meanwhile, Hainan Island will be the site of Jones' latest Chinese creation, Ya Loong Bay. Jones and developer Henry T. Fok Group of Hong Kong are working their way through the planning process. Full-scale construction on the 27-hole resort course will begin later this fall. A late-1997 opening is planned.

JOHORE BAHRU, Malaysia — Nicklaus Design christened two Asia-Pa-

cific courses in December: Emerald One Golf & Country Club in Bogor, Indonesia, and Borneo Golf Resort in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia.

Another eight Nicklaus designs, including The Legends Golf & Country Resort here in Johore Bahru, Malaysia, should be ready this year.

The Legends is a 1,200-acre resort in southern Malaysia that will eventually include four, 18-hole courses. Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer and Gary Player will each design one. The official opening is slated for mid-1996.

Other Nicklaus projects set to open in 1996 are Juredong Resort in Nagara Brunei Darussalam, Brunei; Borneo in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia (Jack Nicklaus II); Antipolo in Manila; Lakelands in Surfer's Paradise, Australia; Mission Hills in Sitenzen, China; Bintan Lagoon on Bintan Island, Indonesia; MacGregor and Oshige country clubs in Japan.

KUNSHAN, Peoples Republic of China — The first 18 holes of the planned 36-hole Grand Shanghai Golf Club are scheduled to open in June. Designed by

Golfplan, the Ronald Fream architecture group, the Grand Shanghai project is located on a 400-hectare site here in Kunshan.

Fream also has two projects underway in Brunei.

• A major renovation is planned for Pantaimentiri Golf Course at Bandar Seri Begawan. Fream designed the original course in the early 1980s. "But golf technology has advanced tremendously since then and we have the opportunity to make some changes," Fream said. Among the improvements will be recontoured fairways, subsurface drainage and a 30-centimeter sand base that will be applied under all fairways.

• The second Brunei project is an 18-hole daily-fee course planned near the Brunei liquefied natural gas loading plant at Lumut. Construction of the seaside layout is scheduled to begin early this year with a tentative opening slated for late 1997.

Golfplan is also wrapping up the design phase for a 36-hole resort course called Ravenswood Sanctuary in Mandurah near Perth, Western Australia. The 1,200-acre resort and residential community has been going through the environmental permitting process for the past 18 months.

Plans are to begin construction this summer.

The Oberoi Hotel Group has contracted with Fream to design golf courses as part of a pair of five-star resort operations planned in India. The first, Nandi Hills near Bangalore, will include a 27-hole layout scheduled to begin construction early this year and to open by mid-to-late 1997.

XIAMEN, Peoples Republic of China — Southern Wood, a Lee Chang-designed course in Xiamen, opened for play late in December. The 18-hole resort layout includes a driving range and practice facility.

Chang, a former associate of Willard Byrd, has several other projects in various stages of completion in mainland China.

After a lengthy delay, construction of the Royal Fortune Golf Club in Guilin began in October. The 18-hole resort course is being developed by FIDE International of Taiwan and is scheduled to open by mid-1997.

An exclusive private course called Shun Feng Golf Club started construction in December. Shun Feng Construction of Taiwan is the developer. The course should be ready for play by summer 1997.

Construction also began last month on San Shui Spring Golf Club in Guangzhou, China. The first nine holes could be ready for play next summer, but the official opening for all 18 holes will not occur until mid-1997. Kary Enterprises of Hong Kong is the developer.

MANILA, The Philippines — Golf course developers in The Philippines continue their commitment to "signature designs" with two new courses in the General Trias area, south of Manila.

Sta. Lucie Realty, developer of the highly successful Orchard courses that hosted the 1995 Johnny Walker Asia Classic, are set to begin construction of Nick Faldo and Isao Aoki courses side by side — the first in The Philippines by each designer.

Construction will begin in November, with potential openings as early as January 1997.

## Philippines busy

Continued from previous page

ment to design an 18-hole course in the picturesque highland city of Baguio, a city famous for its cool climate and university. The developer, Santa Lucia Realty, also developed the top-rated Orchard Golf and Country Club near Manila, which features an 18-hole Player-designed course and another 18 holes by Arnold Palmer.

Meanwhile, Alta Vista Golf Club in Cebu and Puerto Azul Golf & Country Club in Cavite are under construction.

• Aoki, Faldo and Norman are each designing 18 holes for Eagle Ridge in General Trias, while Langer is the architect with IMD for an 18-hole track at Riviera Golf & Country Club in Silang-Cavite and Weiskopf is designing 18 at The Country Club in Canlubang.

The notoriety of Filipino golf is apparently spreading — both through satisfied tourists and via television.

IMG's Rielly attributed Palmer Course Design's success in The Philippines as largely due to "the excellent reviews" it received at its Orchard Golf & Country Club, site of the 1995 Johnnie Walker Classic. Likewise, audiences watched the Dunhill Masters, held on Palmer's Emerald One in Jakarta last November.

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