

GCN AUGUST

MADRID — Two golf courses that architect Robert von Hagge considers “as good as we’ve ever done anywhere” opened within a week of one another in June, here and in Bogogno, Italy.

von Hagge progressive in Spain and Italy

Real Sociedad Hipica Espanola Club de Campo opened its first 18 holes here June 14. Seven days later, Circolo Golf Bogogno, situated west northwest of Milan beneath the Alps, opened its first 18 holes. Both facilities will expand to 36 holes, the Milan course to open in mid-1998 and the Madrid course in 1999.

One of the top clubs in Spain, Real Sociedad Hipica Espanola Club de Campo is moving its headquarters from downtown, where urban sprawl has affected its property, according to von Hagge. It is an equestrian and golf club with 4,000 members.

Situated on “severe” topography, the course boasts “17 wonderful golf holes,” said von Hagge co-designer Rick Baril.

“When you have 17 out of 18 that are great, you’re happy,” he commented.

The clubhouse at Real Sociedad Hipica Espanola Club de Campo is under construction, and work on the second golf course should begin next summer, Baril said.



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Player opens S. Africa 9

PLETTENBERG BAY, South Africa — The first nine holes at Gary Player-designed Goose Valley Golf Club are open for play here on the Keurbooms lagoon, complete with views of the Outeniqua Mountains and Indian Ocean. According to Goose Valley



Managing Director Clive Jandrell, the synergies of golf and real estate have already pegged this unique development a success. “With only 14 out of 272 homes still available for sale,” Jandrell said, “the success of this project speaks for itself.”

The second nine, clubhouse, swimming pool, squash and tennis course should be completed by mid-year.

Elsewhere, the Gary Player Design Company (GPDC) has finished the final nine holes at the 36-hole Fancourt Country Club in George.

The newest nine has been planted. Also, GPDC has been retained to prepare a long-term master plan detailing restoration at storied Durban Country Club, often listed among the world’s best 100 golf courses.

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An Old Country challenge

KINSALE, Ireland — The site sits entirely in County Cork on a peninsula whose cliffs plunge down to the Celtic Sea. It contains what its architect calls “the most natural [golf] hole God ever built.” And, now complete, it stands as the model for new golf course construction in this country, passing stringent environmental permitting that stretched over five years and resulted in an ecological sanctuary and protection for some

fascinating historic landmarks. The property is Old Head Golf Links, an 18-hole semi-private course designed by the American Ron Kirby with consultant Dr. Joe Carr, possibly Ireland’s most successful amateur golfer of all time.

“I’ve never seen anything like this in my life, and others I’ve talked to agree,” said Kirby, who has designed golf courses around the world for three decades.

Kirby said he had faced challenges this stiff (such as handling lava at Mauna Kea Beach Hotel Golf Course in Hawaii) but

“not with this beauty.”

History and modern-day golf meet here. Old Head is a national monument and ancient Royal site, fortified by a castle at the narrowest part of the promontory. Its history traces back to between 200 BC and 400 AD, and it is the only definitely known place directly connected by historians and academics with the Eirean Celtic tribe, who gave its name to Ireland as a whole.



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And the makers of the movie *Endless Summer* declared they had found the No. 1 surfing spot on the globe at Tamarindo.

It was the surfing that attracted superintendent Jay Miller from Daytona Beach, Fla., to a job at Rancho Las Colinas, a golf course in Flamingo Beach designed by Ron Garl. Rancho Las Colinas, which anticipates opening the second nine around Labor Day, and the Robert Trent Jones II-designed Melia Conchal Golf Club, which will open the



Costa Rica takes golf plunge

FLAMINGO BEACH, Costa Rica — First it was fishing. Then surfing. And now, with the advent of its second and third golf courses, Costa Rica has joined the world of tourism. *Traveler* magazine has deemed Costa Rica’s central valley the best climate in the world in which to live. *Sports Illustrated* rated its fishing the world’s best.

back nine holes in June, are the first 18-hole tracks built here in 23 years.

RTJ II lead architect Gary Linn said there has been “a lot of talk about new golf projects — all on the west coast.”

Costa Rica, Garl enthused, “is definitely an emerging market. It truly is a tropical paradise. It’s one of the places that delivers more than it promises.”

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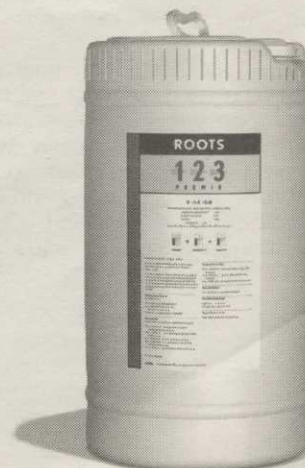
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