

DESERT PINES TSUNAMI RANGE, PERRY DYE COURSE OPEN

LAS VEGAS — Desert Pines, a driving range designed by San Diego-based Tsunami Design and Construction, opened for play here on Feb. 1. The range was developed alongside Perry Dye's Desert Pines Golf Club by The Walters Group. The two-tiered, 60-station, tee-line structure features a landing area sunken an average of seven feet. Target greens emulate some of the most famous holes in the world, complete with water features. Thousands of imported trees complete the once-bleak and abandoned city park.

Vegas market

Continued from previous page and nobody bats an eye."

"The value of the dollar is different here," observed architect Rees Jones, whose Seven Hills Golf Club will open in Henderson this summer. "I don't fully understand it, but people treat their money differently. They don't mind spending. I think they're ready to lose or spend money. They have a

budget, so I don't think the cost of playing matters that much."

Besides, the Las Vegas golf operators understand the value of customer service. The community has built an international reputation for service that has spilled over to golf.

"I just think they do a wonderful job — they know how to entertain," Jones added. "They know how to greet you, make you feel like you're wanted there.

The whole atmosphere of the city pervades golf."

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There must be a few drawbacks here in the city of lights. Nothing could be this perfect, right?

Water is expensive. The Paiutes, because they've developed on reservation land, don't pay for water. However, other developers face water rates of \$750,000 a year, according to Curley.

"And that's today's number," Curley added. "It will probably go up. Water is certainly a key.

"But as the city grows, the hotel development will create more and more treated water. Golf is well positioned because we can take the effluent off their hands."

Land is very expensive in Greater Las Vegas. It's also very difficult to work with, which partly explains the high green fees, according to Jones.

"The rock and the water rights really drive construction costs up," he said. "Our site at Seven Hills was a natural site, but if you have a dead flat piece of property, you will have high costs. If you hit rock and bring in the soil, it adds to the bottom line."

Because tourists don't mind the resulting high green fees, the aggrieved golfing constituency in Las Vegas is the population of year-round residents. As Nekoroski explained, visitors will pay sky-high greens fees forever, but residents won't. And the market is sorely lacking courses offering golf at mid-range green fees.

Angel Park and The Legacy, now operated by Aurora, Ore.-based OB Sports, have implemented a system featuring frequent-player cards. Under the plan, card-holders can secure advance reservations, seven days in advance, at less than 50 percent of the resort fee. There are currently 2,400 participants at the 18-hole Legacy facility and 800 at 36-hole Angel Park.

"Rather than a challenge, we've tried to see this situation as an opportunity," said Phil Green, OB's southwest regional manager.

The Legacy and Angel Park opened in 1989. For some time, they had the daily-fee market to themselves. That's changing, but the market is so strong, even the prospect of increased competition leaves Green optimistic.

"We view it very positively," he maintained. "It's really changing the whole marketing strategy of Las Vegas. It's only been in the last few years there have been enough courses to promote Las Vegas as a golf destination.

"The climate here among operators is very cooperative. And I think it will stay that way because course operators realize that, with the addition of more hotel rooms each year, only more visitors will come. And the more golf courses we have, the more tourists will bring their clubs."



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