

Jones II takes full-service tack at Eagle Point

By PETER BLAIS

MEDFORD, Ore. — The first year of operation here at Eagle Point Golf Course her represents "the fulfillment of a dream," according to course architect Robert Trent Jones Jr.

The 18-hole, public-access course located here in southern Oregon is the first golf facility the Palo Alto, Calif.-based designer owns, operates and manages. Jones, like a growing number of architects [*GCM* February 1996, "Piece of the Pie"], is willing to take an ownership interest in the courses he designs.

"Golf course openings have always marked the end of a design-and-construction operation, which has had a life of anywhere from two to five years," Jones said. "But, now it's a whole lot different, since Eagle Point is a golf course, which we have not just designed and built. For the first time in the history of RTJ II, we will also operate and manage this facility. For me, this fulfills a lifetime ambition."

Initially, Jones did not intend to become owner of Eagle Point, according to course General Manager David Day. Day said the developers were primarily residential builders, who realized during the architect interviewing process they knew little about owning and operating a golf course.

"They gave us the property to build the course," Day explained. "It was a good deal for us and them. It gives them a Robert Trent Jones II course to build their homes around. They are talking about potentially 2,000 lots. The first 25 lots sold out in six weeks. They opened another 37 lots this summer and have already sold half of them."

Day was a course superintendent in the Midwest before joining Jones' construction firm, Greenscape, 10 years ago. He was construction supervisor at Eagle Point and Jones offered to make him general manager once the course was completed.

"The course has been well received," Day said. "Southern Oregon is not a golf Mecca. But this is a top-notch facility."

Day reports to Jones on a daily basis. "And Bobby makes suggestions about the course every time he's here, adding another bunker or something like that," the general manager said. "One of the things he suggested was adding more trees, which we did this fall."

Jones' extensive golf industry contacts and his promotional ability are among

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RTJ Ventures to revamp SCGA's Rancho Calif.

MURRIETA, Calif. — Robert Trent Jones, Sr. and Robert Trent Jones Jr. have unveiled a master plan for the renovation and, ultimately, expansion of The SCGA Member's Club here at Rancho California.

The plan was presented to the boards of directors of the Southern California Golf Association (SCGA) and SCGA Golf Course Management, Inc., the for-profit arm of the SCGA which owns and operates the course

on behalf of the association.

The conceptual plan calls for renovation of the bunkers, adding cart paths, introducing natural grasses and vegetation, renovating teeing areas, and, in future years, adding nine holes to the current 18.

The project is the second undertaken by RTJ Ventures, Inc., a company using the talents of Jones Sr. and his elder son, Jones Sr., now age 90, designed this course in

1970. Jones Jr. worked with his father on portions of the original course design.

Known then as Murrieta Hot Springs GC, the course opened in 1971 as the focal point of a proposed real-estate development by the Teamsters Union. However, legal entanglements forced the course to close a few years later and it lay dormant until 1985, when it reopened as Rancho California Golf Course, a daily-fee facility.

The SCGA purchased the course in 1994 and renamed it as The SCGA Members' Club at Rancho California.

