

Sanford course part of larger tourism plan on Sinai

By MARK LESLIE

SOUTH SINAI, Egypt — Establishment of the South Sinai as a destination tourist resort will take a new step forward in Sharm El Sheikh with the opening in mid-summer of the peninsula's first golf course.

"The Egyptian government wants to increase tourism not only to the archaeological wonders here, but also to make the eastern coast of the Sinai between Sharm and Taba a sort of Riviera of Egypt," said golf course architect John Sanford.

Sanford, of Jupiter, Fla., who designed the Naama Golf Course here, said: "In the three years I've been coming here, it has probably doubled in size."

Chains of the magnitude of Hyatt, Marriott, Sonesta and Intercontinental are either opening hotels here, or are in the planning process. There are now 3,000 to 4,000 hotel rooms in the area, and another 2,000 are expected to be built in the next five or six years.

The government owns all the land in the Sinai and is making it attractive to Egyptian developers to encourage people from all over the world.

"They have the European market pretty well captured," Sanford said. "They're hoping the golf courses will pull in a whole new market to this area — Japanese, Koreans and other Asian golfers, as well as Americans."

Naama Golf Course will be one of only a half dozen in the country. A couple of others outside Cairo are in the same construction sequence as the one here and should open for play this summer.

"A few new country club communities around Cairo have opened. Egyptians are selling units there so people can look out and see green grass, but they [Egyptians] are still not playing golf," Sanford said. "But here in Sharm, European tourists would love to golf if it were available. And now it will be."

Meanwhile, he said, "There is plenty of talk of more." With the added hotels will come support for more than one golf course.

The major constraint is water. Naama Golf Course will survive because its developer, which owns The Movenpick hotel here, is building a sewage treatment plant. That plant will supply Naama's irrigation water.

Otherwise, the Sinai has no natural sweet water, Sanford said, adding, "All the wells we drilled have come up pure salt."

Naama's master plan includes 300 villas along with restaurants and a new 5-star hotel.

The climate in South Sinai is

suited for tourism. It is extremely hot in the summer and very temperate in the winter.

The area, in Sanford's view, "is awesome. The Red Sea on one side is a beautiful body of water. Our site looks at Tiran — where the Red Sea parts and goes to the Gulf of Suez to the northwest and Golf Elat to the northeast ... and on the other side is the mountains of the Sinai which

turn all different colors at sunrise and sunset."

...

Naama Golf Course covers more than 150 acres of land, but the grassed area is about 70 acres. Because there is no vegetation on the property, planners will undertake a thorough landscape plan, introducing trees, palms, shrubs and ground cover.

"We have the effluent water to

keep it lush and green," Sanford said. "But at the same time we don't want to obliterate the desert. We're using it for a lot of waste areas between holes and interacting with the strategy of a number of golf holes."

The construction has been made interesting, also, because the ground is tough coral shell. It has had to be ripped and crushed, much like construction



John Sanford

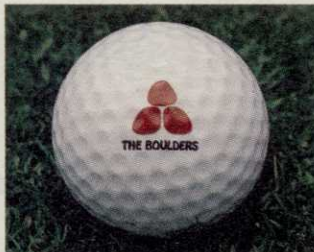
on lava sites.

"All the play areas have had to be completely topsoiled with good material," Sanford said.

That chore has been the job of Total Golf Construction, the golf course contractor from Vero Beach, Florida.



Grand National
Auburn/Opelika, AL



The Boulders Resort
Carefree, AZ



Grayhawk Golf Club
Scottsdale, AZ



Four Seasons Resort Aviara
Carlsbad, CA



Keystone Ranch Golf Course
Keystone Resort, CO



Jupiter Hills Club
Jupiter, FL



Lake Nona Club
Orlando, FL



Pine Tree Golf Club
Boynton Beach, FL

The Best Courses In America Use Primo. Which May



Reynolds Plantation
Greensboro, GA



Ivanhoe Club
Ivanhoe, IL



Bryn Mawr Country Club
Lincolnwood, IL



Glen Oaks Country Club
West Des Moines, IA



Lassing Pointe Golf Course
Union, KY



Bethesda Country Club
Bethesda, MD



Poquoy Brook Golf Club
Lakeville, MA



High Pointe Golf Club
Williamsburg, MI

A golf course's biggest asset is its grass. Fast greens, luxurious fairways, and thick roughs leave lasting impressions with every golfer.

That's why superintendents at the country's best courses use Primo®. It redirects the

growth of grass, for a thicker, more compact stand, more root mass, and ultimately, better-looking grass.

Plus, by effectively managing turf growth, Primo reduces clippings and mowing time.

