

Calif. track starts construction after 12-year wait

GILROY, Calif. — Twelve years after the development was first proposed, preliminary construction has begun here at Eagle Ridge, a housing development of 650 homes (831 master planned) whose centerpiece will be an 18-hole golf course designed by Santa Rosa, Calif.-based Golfplan, The Ronald

Fream Design Group.

Located 30 minutes from San Jose, Eagle Ridge will serve the South Bay market that features a growing population of golfers but relatively few daily-fee facilities. According to David Dale, senior golf course architect with Golfplan, the course should open for play in spring 1999.

"It will be worth the wait," said Dale, whose team collaborated on the Eagle Ridge design with PGA consultant Johnny Miller. "The course will be laid out across 197 acres, with numerous barancas and riparian areas to play over and alongside. We've succeeded in getting back to some of the old shotmaking op-

portunities - allowing the ball to roll by extending fairways around the green areas. There are revetted [sod-wall] bunkers that occur on a few of the precision shotmaking holes. There are also flashed bunkers reminiscent of A.W. Tillinghast architecture. All of the green sites are unique, however they are somewhat elevated and rolled in key areas, reminiscent of the

Donald Ross philosophy of green design. The golfer will definitely experience a lot of variety."

William Zmistowski Associates of Boulder, Colo. will design the clubhouse. Zmistowski is responsible for the clubhouses at Sherwood Country Club, home of the Shark Shootout, and Castle Pines Golf Club, home of the PGA Tour's International tournament.

The realization of Eagle Ridge was a long time coming, as two separate environmental impact reports (EIR) and the endangered-but-resourceful Tiger salamander kept the project in limbo. Working with the developer, Shapell Industries of North California, the Golfplan team waded through red tape for 12 years before Eagle Ridge received permitting approval late last fall.

"We stood by Shapell because we pride ourselves in working with developers through thick and thin," said Dale. "We were impressed with Shapell's commitment to the development of this project, and its determination to make this the premier course north of Monterey. The EIRs delayed things significantly.

"Then there's the Tiger salamander - which was actually found in a housing area, not a golf course area. Needless to say, the housing is no longer in that area, although the necessity to consider the migrating paths of the salamander resulted in some interesting planning."

Golfplan has designed Eagle Ridge to measure 6,965 yards from the tips and 5,080 yards from the front tees. In between there are four more sets of tee boxes, providing "a dramatic and interesting mix of length and angles on each hole," said Dale.

"Three holes play along Uvas Creek, and hole 14 plays through a beautiful valley, then up into the highlands overlooking the city of Gilroy. It's a spectacular site: Live oaks, sycamores, valley oak, Manzanita. It really creates a special atmosphere out there, playing around and through excellent specimen trees and dynamic micro-environments."

OHIO'S BOB-O'-LINK TO EXPAND TO 36 HOLES

AVON, Ohio — The public, 27-hole Bob-O'-Link Golf Course, a popular layout for Lorain and Cuyahoga County golfers since it opened in 1969, plans to add nine more holes. The course opened with 18 holes. Avon residents Bill Fitch and Dale Smitek bought it in 1977 and then added another nine. Fitch said business has been good enough to support another nine holes, which would create a 36-hole facility.

