

GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

A UNITED PUBLICATION
VOLUME 9, NUMBER 5
MAY 1997 • \$5.50

INSIDE

Midwest Still Booming

The North Central region once again leads the nation in development. How much is too much? 4-5

The Ascension of Alice

Read our Q&A with Alice Dye, who will take over as the ASGCA's first female president this month 39



COLLABORATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Jim Colbert (center) studies site plans in Kansas City with Baxter Spann (left) of Finger, Dye, Spann and Ron Fogler of the development firm, Colbert-Burns & McDonnell (CBM). For a story on CBM, see page 49.

COURSE MAINTENANCE

Q&A with Iowa researcher Nick Christians 17
UCal Riverside unveils traffic simulator 21
Safety Focus: Lockouts, tagouts & gasoline 30

COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Alabama may add another stop to Jones Trail 6
Hurdzan: Golf is addicted to water 39
Matthews adds Spencer to his staff 45

COURSE MANAGEMENT

Gone Private: Senior Tour site makes switch 11
Golden Bear Club Services, managing its own 51
Alfonso on the value of family businesses 52

SUPPLIER BUSINESS

Yamaha enters tour-sponsorship arena 59
Barenbrug expands U.S., overseas operations 62
What's new in the marketplace? 66

New Reality: Find funding or fall back

• Legends Group forms management REIT

By PETER BLAIS

GolfTrust of America — a real estate investment trust established by the founders of Myrtle Beach, S.C.-based Legends Group — will raise \$300 million over the next three years allowing it to acquire at least 30 courses by the end of the decade, according to the investment banking

firm that helped develop Golf Trust's original February stock offering.

"Golf Trust owns 10 courses at this time," said Christopher Haley, senior research analyst with Wheat First Butcher Singer. "It expects to acquire another \$55 million in 1997, \$110 million in 1998 and \$140 million in

1999. That should allow the REIT to more than triple the size of its portfolio."

Golf Trust of America's goal is to use the estimated \$49.9 million raised through its initial Feb. 7 stock offering and a line of credit to acquire high-quality, daily-fee and private courses and lease them back to independent lessees, usually the prior own-

Continued on page 55



Roger Behrstock

• Meadowbrook locates \$40 million partner in Apollo

By PETER BLAIS

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. — Fast-growing Meadowbrook Golf Group has completed a \$40 million deal with Apollo Real Estate Advisors, a real-estate investment firm, that will allow Meadowbrook to expand its efforts to build, buy, lease and manage golf courses.

"If we do a good job with this first effort, Apollo has the ability to supply us with a great amount of money down the road," said Meadowbrook President Roger Behrstock. "We've really become their golf wing. This \$40 million will lead to \$100 million in actual transactions. We'll probably look at issuing a REIT (real estate investment trust) in a year or two."

The exact details have

Continued on page 57

Study: Golf has minimal impact on water table

By MARK LESLIE

WHEATON, Md. — Preliminary findings of studies monitoring ground- and surface-water quality at nearly 40 golf courses reinforce industry claims that courses are not a danger, particularly when compared to other sources of chemicals, according to Stuart Cohen, president of Environmental & Turf Services, Inc. here.

"Overall, these results show that golf courses are not having a significant impact on human health or aquatic organisms relative to other sources of chemicals in the environment," Cohen said of the study he conducted for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) Foundation.

Cohen said he was pleasantly surprised by the surface-water data, having

Continued on page 67



THE WATER'S EDGE

The peninsular 4th green at a new Palmer design — Legacy Golf Course in Sarasota, Fla. — illustrates the interdependence of water and golf. For a special report on the politics of water rights, see pages 35-38. For an update on the Legacy and other Palmer Golf Course Design projects, see page 50.

Developers delight in Costa Rican economics

By MARK LESLIE

FLAMINGO BEACH, Costa Rica — First it was fishing. Then surfing. And now, with the advent of its second and third courses, Costa Rica has joined the world of tourism.

Rancho Las Colinas opened nine holes in November and anticipates opening the second nine around Labor Day. The Robert Trent Jones II-designed Melia Conchal Golf Club intends to open the back nine holes in June. These are the first 18-hole courses built here in 23

Continued on page 44



Ron Garl's course at Rancho las Colinas, located near Flamingo Beach, is one of several Costa Rican projects coming to fruition.

GARL, MARRIOTT UNVEIL LEARNING CENTER IN ORLANDO

ORLANDO, Fla. — Lake-land-based golf course architect Ron Garl has introduced his mega teaching/learning complex here at Marriott's Grande Vista, the newest Marriott Vacation Club Resort.

Serving as home to the Faldo Golf Institute, the learning center is open to the public and

Faldo Institute students. It features Garl's "Scoring" — a muscle-memory practice area designed for shots of 100 yards or less, a nine-hole, 2,400-yard course, a teaching/learning complex with five practice tees and more than 200 hitting stations, and a \$1 million 27-hole lighted putting course.

Costa Rica

Continued from page 1

years. Cariari International Country Club, designed by George Fazio in 1973, has long been the country's only 18-hole golf course, and there are three nine-holers, according to Garl.

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. It is like Hawaii but one-third the cost," climatic and financial attributes that draw tourists from North America and Europe.

Citing "a number of courses on the drawing board," Garl said developers are excited about having a golfing neighbor in the

Spanish Melia Hotel Group. "The Jones team will do a wonderful job and we'll have a one-two punch," he said.

"From November to June it's like California in the summer," said Linn. "It won't rain a drop and it's 85 degrees."

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. And the makers of the movie *Endless Summer* declared they had found the No. 1 surfing spot on the globe at Tamarindo. Indeed, it was the surfing, in fact, that attracted superintendent Jay Miller from Daytona Beach to a job at Rancho Las Colinas.

Melia Conchal Golf Resort has completed its first phase, opening 300 rooms. Rancho Las Colinas contains a small-scale, 20-room hotel and a number of single-family residences.

Rancho Las Colinas is being developed by Americans David Girsks of West Palm Beach and Mike and Jack Osborne of Miami and Costa Rica. The Osbornes' father had owned the property for many years.

Garl called it "simply the prettiest place I've ever seen. The mountains go right into the sea. It has coves with white sand beaches."

The golf course site combines ranchland, intersected by creeks, and hills, from which golfers can look across an estuary to the Pacific Ocean. A river borders part of the layout. And elevation changes about 120 feet.

Garl brought some of his Florida-style design to the track, he said, "because it has the same kind of climate and similar vegetation, although it is true tropical whereas Florida is subtropical."

The 13th is the signature hole, climbing up the side of a mountain. When construction crews started cutting out the green, they uncovered a reddish solid rock. So Garl took advantage of it, creating a natural wall in front of the green. It is a par-4 that plays about 365 yards.

"We tried to shape the holes like the mountains in the nearby background," Garl said, "so the golf course is an extension of those mountains."

Having a 30-year presence in Costa Rica, the developers "had a sense the timing was right to bring golf to this part of the world," Garl said. "They have done very well in land sales and golf so far. They are very pleased."

Meanwhile, RTJ II is building nine holes on either side of the Melia Conchal Resort's hotel complex, which sits on a pure shell beach. Each nine is a self-contained entity sitting in a valley and stretching into the hills, Linn said.

The 18 holes will play to par 72 and stretch over 7,020 yards.

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