

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

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INSIDE

## Great Expectations

Turf meets business training in new curriculum at Kansas State University ..... 17

## International Report

Sri Lanka? Oman? Golf is booming in disparate places around the globe ..... 41-49



**FOES NO LONGER: GAUNT & MARNOCH LTD.**  
Jonathan Gaunt (right) and Steve Marnoch, two of England's youngest golf course architects, have decided to join forces. Their mission: To become bigger players in the global golf course design market. See Q&A page 45.

### COURSE MAINTENANCE

Canada's Meyer sets high goals ..... 17  
Prepping Royal Birkdale for the Open ..... 21  
Shop Talk: Using overhead space ..... 32

### COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Rulewich starts solo signature ..... 35  
Armchair architects eye Mackenzie Prize ..... 39  
Rees Jones, Redstone team in Texas ..... 50

### COURSE MANAGEMENT

One photo is worth about \$1,000 ..... 51  
Palmer Management pares 45 minutes ..... 52  
Club Corp. International's Henner speaks out .... 54

### SUPPLIER BUSINESS

Textron/Ransomes: The dust settles ..... 59  
It's a greens roller roller coaster ..... 60  
Plant Health Care, Griffin align ..... 62

## Poa annua control finally within sight

By MARK LESLIE

SAN DIEGO — A control for annual bluegrass, or *poa annua*, has been the desire of the golf course industry for at least half a century. Now it appears one has arrived, and the bonus is that it is a natural bacteria.

"If this works as well as it appears, it's huge [for the industry]. I'm excited," said Dr. Joe Vargas of Michigan State University about the bacteria *Xanthomonas campestris*. "When I got into this business in the 1950s we were talking about how to get rid of *poa annua*. Here we are, 40 years later, talking about how to get rid of *poa*. And the market is almost nationwide."

Acutely selective, *Xanthomonas campestris* kills only *poa annua*, not  
Continued on page 30

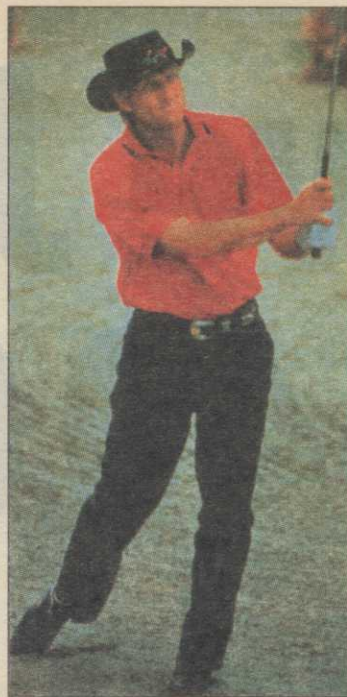
## Purdue embarks on 5-year course research project

By MARK LESLIE

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — With the help of course architect Pete Dye, multiple donors and a group of students who built it, Purdue University on June 27 will open a golf course that will produce a major five-year study on the effects of golf maintenance on ground and surface water.

Pointing out that environmentalists criticize past corporate-funded studies as biased, Dye said: "What Purdue produces should be the most unbiased report, simply because there is no reason to be biased. Good or bad, no one can argue

Continued on page 32



## The Shark and Hurdzan keynote Public Golf Forum

By MICHAEL LEVANS

PALM SPRINGS, Calif. — The Shark's clipped fin may keep him off the PGA Tour but it's certainly not slowing him down.

Greg Norman, golf's premier international spokesman and all-time money winner, will kick off day two of this year's Public Golf Forum, the *Golf Course News*-sponsored business conference and expo for superintendents, owners, managers and developers of public access golf facilities on October 26 & 27 at Rancho Las Palmas Marriott Resort in Palm Springs, California.

Continued on page 70



(Top) Greg Norman, golf's all-time leading money winner, lifts one out of the sand. (Left) The king of the environmentally-sound public golf design, Michael Hurdzan, on site at Desert Willow.

## Greece: Will 30 courses in 3 years be possible?

By TREVOR LEDGER

ATHENS, Greece — The Greek Government has made a startling commitment to golf course development with its stated intention of having 30 new golf courses built in its beautiful country over the next three years.

As the rest of Europe (on the whole) leaped into the golf course stratosphere — 43.9 percent increase in courses since 1990 — Greece has

bucked the trend by actually losing one of its five courses and leaving the country with only four.

This looks all set to change. The Hellenic Tourism Office (EOT) hosted a meeting at Wentworth last July for golf course architects, holiday companies and tourism specialists in order to out-

Continued on page 42



American Golf Corp.'s Sierra Nevada Golf Club in Genoa, Nev., to open this month. See page 3.

## Greece aims for 30 courses

Continued from page 1

line the proposals. This was followed up in November 1997 with a congress in Thessalonica where the draft plans were firmed up, to a degree at least.

Nikos Scoulas, director general of EOT, explained that the Greek government is pushing through a law which will give financial incentive to new golf projects in Greece and the Greek Islands. Grants will be worth approximately 40 percent of cost to developers, a vast figure which goes a long way towards confirming just how keen Greece is to develop golf courses quickly.

Costas Deriziotis, assistant to Scoulas, conveyed a steadfast determination on the part of Greece. "Greece

assures the international community that it is willing to construct 30 golf courses during the next 3 years," said Deriziotis. "Greece meets all the prerequisites; an excellent climate, available properties, the required national legislation, the funds and the specialists.

"Furthermore, we, as the Hellenic Tourism Organisation, have the technical specifications required for courses, ready for any investor. These standards are based on international standards and allow for quick state approval of grants and other incentives."

The incentives are lip smackingly attractive, including a 40-percent grant for new golf course construction with further grants — 100-percent tax breaks and

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CIRCLE #119

## Manila

Continued from page 41

location — in the center of one of Asia's largest cities — is overwhelming. There is no other site in a major city anywhere in the world where you could do this sort of project."

In addition to Fort Bonafacio, Fream and Co. are collaborating on five separate projects in The Philippines. In Silang, the firm is collaborating with Kwok Philippine Properties, Inc. (KPP) on one of the country's most ambitious real estate, commercial and leisure projects.

When completed, the Silang development will be home to more than 10,000 people, a Shangri La hotel, shops, schools and commercial properties. The golf course, designed with help from PGA consultant Colin Montgomerie, will be an ultra-exclusive enclave within the 2,500-acre (1000-hectare) development.

Elsewhere, the 18-hole Crystaal Golf Club, developed by a Manila commercial real estate developer, will feature spectacular views of the volcanic Lake Taal — the "taal" in Crystaal. Located south of Manila, Lake Taal is a volcanic crater that features several islands — the products of still more volcanic activity. In nearby Tagaytay, Golfplan has also been contracted to provide master planning and design services for 36 holes at Batulao Highlands. The developers are a consortium of Filipino and Singaporean companies. In Cavite, Golfplan is working with Santa Lucia Development Inc. on Santa Lucia Saddle and Clubs Residential Estates.

At Sparrebosch, Golfplan's hotly anticipated South African design, site construction is underway and dedicated course construction will begin in June, according to David Dale, Golfplan vice president and senior designer.

Dale added that Golfplan's native plant restoration designs are complete, and the project has received all its approvals from South Africa's various coastal commissions.

Located outside the resort town of Knysna, the 18-hole Sparrebosch course will sit atop a naturally contoured parcel on East Head, the spectacular headlands overlooking the Indian Ocean. Upon completion — a dramatic New Year's Eve 1999 opening has been planned — Sparrebosch will be the southernmost golf course on the African continent. This will provide Golfplan a unique bookend, as the firm also designed the continent's northernmost course: the 27-hole Golf de Tabarka Resort high above the Tunisian port city of Tabarka.



## Greece eyes 30

Continued from previous page

a 40-percent grant against interest — designed to quicken the pulse of any developer.

If doubts remain as to the financial commitment involved, Deriziotis confirmed the steely resolve: "Whatever the cost, the Greek Government is ready to make that investment."

However there is an undercurrent of unease throughout the industry as to how realistic the target is. Bearing in mind that another Southern European country, Italy, a country with a fairly established golf course construction infrastructure, has had but 13 new courses over the last three years — in itself a pretty impressive figure.

One of the speakers at the Thessalonica congress was British architect Howard Swan. Swan said he is very excited at the opportunities offered in Greece and has the experience of working there on the Glyfada course (original design by Donald Harradine and updated by Robert Trent Jones).

Nevertheless, Swan supplied a telling caveat pointing out that the 30 courses in three years proposal is far too optimistic.

A number of architects who wished to remain anonymous expressed concern over the availability of land in Greece, repeating the perceived view that small plots were owned by very many individuals, thus making the required acreage for a golf course a difficult purchasing proposition.

Deriziotis gave the official, and very different, story. "Land sites available include huge tracts of prime property owned by the EOT, which will go out to tender," said Deriziotis. "Serious proposals have already been accepted for 15 new golf courses, one within each of the following areas: Halkidiki, Thessaloniki, Kos Island, South West Greece, Central Greece, Avavissos, Argolis, Mytilini and Kefalonia. Four have been proposed on Crete, two on Rhodes."

While Greece is an established tourist region with many Germans and Britons especially, making it their first choice destination, the ETO is naturally keen to expand upon that market share.

"The Greek golf development program is definitely part of our [Greece's] efforts to attract activity-oriented tourism...that will attract visitors all year round," added Deriziotis.

Then there are the spinoffs to consider: A natural result of having so many courses available will be an influx of domestic players into the market.

With such a massive development underway the scene is likely to resemble an international gathering of the golf course industry.

The involvement of Greek professionals seems to be assured as Deriziotis informs: "We have both, [course architects and constructors] and a very capable Greek Technical Chamber that can carry out a call for contract tenders. Additional golf personnel, e.g. greenkeepers, could come from our present army of professional gardeners with the state subsidising retraining programs.

The EOT has already proposed train-

ing programs in golf course management and maintenance with funding from the Second Community Framework of Support program in Greece."

Greece is a hot country with low rainfall. While this has made for a great tourist industry it doesn't look to sit too well with easy golf course maintenance. One of the existing courses, Portocarras (originally designed by Geoffrey Cornish), suffers from lack of water and is reported as being difficult to keep green.

The irrigation experts have not failed to recognise this problem, one such company tendering for projects in Greece is

*'Whatever the cost, the Greek Government is ready to make that investment.'*

— Costas Deriziotis

York & Martin Ltd. Co-director Phillip York came straight to the point: The big issue in Greece is water with maybe 3,000 cubic meters per day required on a golf course.

Yet some villages have their water supplied by tanker.

Deriziotis bobs and counters with a straight right: "Within areas of low rainfall, water for the landscaping can be supplied by technical methods, such as drilling and/or water derived from waste water after biological cleansing.

"The waste water will come from neighboring hotels and communities. Some of our best and largest hotel units have been using the biological method very successfully for years now."

The next conference in Greece to discuss the golf project is scheduled for May 14, hopefully any loose ends will be tied securely to hard business plans.



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