

BRIEFS



UNITED GROUP ACQUIRES SERENOA GC

NEW YORK—United Golf Group, a private course owner, has acquired Serenoa Golf Club, an 18-hole semi-private course in Sarasota, Fla., for \$7.1 million. United Golf Chief Executive Officer Mark Mashburn said: "The Serenoa course fits in well with our long-term goal of acquiring a portfolio of quality courses throughout the country." United Golf is a course ownership company based in New York. United Golf's management includes personnel with a combined 50 years of experience with course acquisition and management as well as individuals with extensive experience in the capital markets. For more information on United Golf Group, contact 212-317-0300.

GOLF TRUST REPORTS FINANCIALS

CHARLESTON, S.C. — Golf Trust of America (GTA), Inc., a self-administered real-estate investment trust, reported first-quarter Funds from Operations (FFO) of \$6.8 million or 54 cents per share, on revenues of \$8.9 million compared to FFO of \$3.3 million, or 41 cents per share, on revenues of \$3.8 million for the prior year's first quarter. The 32-percent increase in FFO is principally due to acquisitions during the year. In the first quarter of 1998, GTA purchased six courses for a total investment of \$100 million. As of March 31, the company had an interest in a total of 28 courses.

NGP REPORTS FFO GROWTH

SANTA MONICA, Calif. — National Golf Properties Inc. reported funds from operations (FFO) of \$12.8 million in the quarter ended March 31, a 10-percent increase from \$11.7 million in the same quarter a year earlier. On a per-share basis, NGP reported FFO of 61 cents per share compared to 56 cents a year earlier. NGP declared distributions to stockholders of 43 cents for the quarter ended March 31.

CARLTON JOINS MASTERS TEAM

ORLANDO, Fla.—Masters Golf Corp. has hired Wendy Carlton as its marketing coordinator. Carlton will provide marketing support as well as marketing and membership generation services for Masters-managed clubs. She joins the Masters team after a career with TeamStaff and Arabian Nights where she gained extensive experience in marketing and client relations.



The new Robert Trent Jones Sr.-designed course at Playa Grande in the Dominican Republic.

New destination: Dominican Republic

By PETER BLAIS

RIO SAN JUAN, Dominican Republic — WANTED: Top-notch superintendent to manage an 18-hole piece of paradise on the northeast coast of this Caribbean island nation.

The country's national bank, Banco Central, recently opened an 18-hole, Robert Trent Jones Sr.-designed course along the windswept cliffs of Playa Grande, an hour east of Puerto Plata International Airport.

Wishing to preserve its majestic, \$8 million investment, bank officials recently announced they are seeking an experienced superintendent to manage Playa Grande's Bermudagrass fairways, tiff dwarf greens and devilish Jones-designed bunkers.

Banco Central built the course in the hopes of enticing a major developer to buy both the course and surrounding acreage, where six major hotels and numerous vacation homes are planned.

One seemingly logical developer would be Allegro Resorts, which owns a 300-

room hotel bordering the course — Caribbean Village Playa Grande. Allegro guests currently purchase the bulk of the rounds. However, Allegro is in the hotel business — operating 30 resorts worldwide under the Allegro, Caribbean Village and Jack Tar resort banners.

"We are resort operators, not developers," said Benny Guavera, president of Allegro's management services division.

Allegro would prefer to stay with its strength, resort operations, and leave development of the six remaining resort sites and residential housing lots to a major real-estate developer, Guavera explained. The risk for Allegro, is that other resorts developed on the surrounding property would also want to send their guests to the Playa Grande course, which includes 13 holes overlooking the Atlantic and three holes requiring drives across the pounding surf.

Allegro's Caribbean Village hopes to eventually add another 200 rooms, bringing it to 500. The other six planned re-

Continued on page 57

GUEST ANALYSIS

One photo is worth...a thousand bucks

By WARREN MARR

Let's get a few stark realities out of the way: First, with 400 new courses opening each year, competition among facilities becomes more heated with each passing day. Accordingly, marketing a course has taken on an importance no one could have envisioned just 10 years ago.

One of the most important marketing tools a golf course has is the course itself — or, at the very least, color course photographs around which owners can shape advertising, public relations and media campaigns.

Considering the importance of photography and its considerable expense, there is more to getting good marketing images than simply hiring a photographer. The complete process involves planning, accepting the probability of adjusting your play schedule, and perhaps even renting a cherry picker. As a course photographer, I've come to realize there are certain steps a course owner can take to get the most from their photographic investment.

To maximize a photographer's performance, the most important thing an owner can do is properly prepare the course for the shoot. To each of my clients, I routinely send a checklist well in advance of my arrival. Some of these items may seem obvious, but you'd be surprised what a difference they can make.

It's also extremely helpful to allow photographers enough time to familiarize themselves with the course. Light is the key factor; morning and evening light are generally the best, but they fall differently on every course and hole. Shadows are dramatic, but putting surfaces need to be well lit. If skilled photographers are given enough time to scout the layout, they can establish a sound game plan.

Communication is important. Owners should prepare a list of holes they would like to feature; make sure the photographer understands your priorities. Also, understand that an experienced photographer can usually shoot four to six holes per day — two or three in the morning and two or three in the evening, depending on whether Mother Nature is cooperating and how crowded the course is. Owner

Continued on page 58

PERSONNEL CORNER

Ottis, Aretha & junior golfers

By VINCE ALFONSO

Ottis Redding wrote the song and The Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin had one of her biggest hits with it. You guessed it, "R-E-S-P-E-C-T." The lyrics of that song focus our attention on getting respect. I want to talk to you about giving respect.

I spent from 1964 to 1977, dividing my time between a career in the music business and working with Vince, Sr. at Bella Vista Country Club in Memphis, Tenn.. As I reflect on those years, I can easily compare my love of music and the respect I have

for the talents of Mr. Redding and Ms. Franklin with my love and the respect I have for junior golfers. I want to use that familiar refrain of



Vince Alfonso

Mr. Redding's, Re-Re-Re-Respect to draw your attention and that of your staff to what it means to give Re-Re-Re-Respect to junior golfers, rather than trying so hard to get it from them.

My dad, Vince Sr., and my Uncle Mario showed me respect as a junior golfer by taking time, real time, to teach me the game. And they didn't just teach me how to hold a club and then say, 'Take a whack at it Bud. Let's see what you can do.'

Continued on page 56



Marr photo of Pasatiempo in Santa Barbara.

Marr

Continued from page 51

and photographer should establish the most photogenic holes in advance and concentrate on getting dramatic pictures there during the best light. Documenting all 18 holes, if desired, should be left to the middle of the day.

Here's a good tip: If at all possible, leave the rough uncut in

advance of a shoot. This vastly improves definition and provides better contrast. Daily-fee course owners must consider their pace of play. However, if you're trying to attract players in the long-term, this short-term measure will help produce better photographs.

Acquire a "championship" pin to use in photographs, as they are fatter and more visible.

For a course owner, the

most important consideration is what happens to play when a photographer is working on site. In an "ideal" world, there are no players to work around. However, in the "real" world, the photographer must be sensitive to the fact that green fees are sacred. This is another subject the owner and photographer should discuss at length, because it is the single

most critical element affecting the resulting photography. There are several options, some better than others:

1) Close the back nine in the morning/front nine in the afternoon, or vice versa. This is the preferred option as it allows the photographer time to work efficiently, unhindered by players. Further, this method allows the photographer to

shoot the back nine, unhindered by golfers, from sun-up until the first group arrives on No. 10 tee. By closing the first tee four hours before sundown, the photographer gets the same unfettered crack at the front nine.

2) Leave a "hole" in the tee sheet — This approach requires an owner to leave open two or three consecutive starting times on the tee sheet, allowing the photographer a window of time to shoot 18 golfer-free holes.

Advantages? Not so much lost revenue.

Disadvantages? The moving window of empty holes dictates when the photos are taken, something light and weather conditions should do. Also, because time is of the essence, the photographer will definitely need an assistant (or two or three) to prepare bunkers, hide rakes, remove stakes, etc.

3) Take pictures that include golfers, or work around them — This option is less than ideal. Well-meaning "real" golfers create problems by blocking good angles, failing to rake bunkers, etc. It is frustrating to line up the perfect frame, wait expectantly for the sun to emerge from behind a cloud bank, only to have some guy take the pin out. From the players' perspective, a photographer's activities are distracting, if not an outright interference with their games.

Some people like the idea of having golfers in the photographs. If so, then the best course action is the use of professional models who are physically and athletically attractive, have the proper clothing and, most important, are experienced at being directed. Also, a bad swing can make the best picture look amateurish, so a good alternative to models would be the course pro.

Still, the best golf shots feature nothing but the course.

Technological caveat: Today's digital processing allows photographers to enhance photos with considerable skill. It's a time-consuming and expensive additional fee. However, grass can be filled in; it's possible to remove power lines, hazard stakes, even the home under construction behind the 11th tee. This means owners can use photography to market their products before they are fully mature or even open for play. However, there is a fine line between reality and fantasy. For our purposes, digital imaging should ultimately be viewed as a fine-tuning, not a reconstructive tool.

Warren Marr has photographed golf courses all over the United States and 11 other countries. He can be reached at 818/352-9605.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

Keeps lakes and ponds beautiful... and useful!

NEW AquaCure Aquatic Herbicide and AquaCure Aquatic Algaecide can keep your lakes and ponds serene and clean — without interrupting use of the water for irrigation and recreation.

- AquaCure treated lakes and ponds are available immediately for irrigation of putting greens, fairways and ornamental plants.
- AquaCure treated water can also be used without interruption for fishing and swimming.



AquaCure™
AQUATIC HERBICIDE

provides effective control of many aquatic weed species, including American pondweed (*Potamogeton nodosus*), Hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*) and Brazilian Elodea (*Egeria densa*).



AquaCure™
AQUATIC ALGAECIDE

provides effective control of various filamentous, planktonic and branched algae in golf course, ornamental, fish, irrigation and fire ponds.

pbi/gordon
corporation
An Employee-Owned Company

www.pbigordon.com

Always Read and
Follow Label Directions

AQUACURE™ is a trademark of
PBI/Gordon Corporation.

© 1998, PBI/Gordon Corporation. T028/698