

By MARK LESLIE

MACAU BEACH, Dominican Republic — A development encompassing three golf courses, two hotels and homes along three miles of beachfront property is expected to break ground here by the end of the year.

With its 54-hole golf complex, the new Macau Beach Resort hopes to draw golfers from America and Europe to by properties and play its 54-hole complex as well as the famed Casa de Campo. The property is compelling, said British golf course architect Clive Clark, who will design the first course with Sam Snead,

the second with golf instructor David Ledbetter and the third with an as-yet-undetermined consultant.

"A headland at the northern end of the property will be devoted to one golf course," Clark said. "It will have a cliff-top look, and the land gently slopes down to the ocean so the ocean is in view over the entire course. It has a half to three-quarters of a mile of ocean frontage. And the

other two courses are alongside the ocean. It's a huge site."

Amsterdam, Holland-based Golf Ag One is developing the property and has been working with European governments to finalize tax-effective purchasing agreements for Europeans.

Clark said he expects Golf Ag One to fast-track the second course, beginning construction shortly after the first is com-

pleted. It will be Ledbetter's first venture into course design.

Clark will visit the property again in early summer to begin the design process with Snead. He said the site is very similar to Casa de Campo's, but boasting both beachfront and cliff-top.

Is it a challenge to design courses so close to the Pete Dye-designed Casa de Campo track, nicknamed "Teeth of the Dog"?

"Yes," he said, "we want to produce something of a high standard because Casa de Campo is so good. In terms of cliff-top golf Casa de Campo is about as good as anything in the world, very much on a par with Pebble Beach."

The layout will measure as long as 7,000 yards from the back tees, Clark said.

Golf Ag One hopes to attract some form of professional involvement with a tournament of some type.

Vietnam project OK'd

HANOI — Vietnam's government has approved a \$22.1-million joint venture between Gateway Development Ltd. and a local firm to build an 18-hole golf course in the northern province of Hai Hung. Construction is expected to start in April.

Hoang Van Bao, vice-general director of the venture said the foreign partner, which is registered in the British Virgin Islands, would contribute 70 percent of the total investment capital. Hai Duong Tourism and Hotels Co. would contribute the remainder in the form of land-use rights.

Bao said the course will be located on a 321-acre site 50 miles east of Hanoi.

Work on a number of golf courses in Vietnam is already under way, but some have hit problems because of sensitivities in the country associated with acquiring land for construction from farmers.

Venezuela

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three — are being built first, with housing construction following.

Palmer is designing a nine-hole course, which will expand to 18 holes in the second phase of the project, probably in two years.

Ground could be broken as early as April, and a summer 1999 opening is expected.

"The property is basically dome-shaped and sits on a large knob," said Veal, "and the golf course skirts around the lower part. It has good elevation, with beautiful views over an agricultural valley and the city of Barquisimeto."

Developers face the problem of few Venezuelan golfers. "As they start building facilities like this they expect the demand will skyrocket," Veal said. "I think you will see a boom in golf here for sure. Arnold Palmer Design is attracting real-estate developers who can get instant credibility before the course is built."

While the future is not certain, these projects go a long way in relieving the pressure for more golf holes in a country where the latest surge of development was in the 1960s when Dick Wilson and Joe Lee designed layouts here.

"I know some local people are skeptical about the economic future here," said Sunshine Design's Commins. "But keep in mind, in terms of scale, 'a lot' of opportunities here might mean 20 courses."

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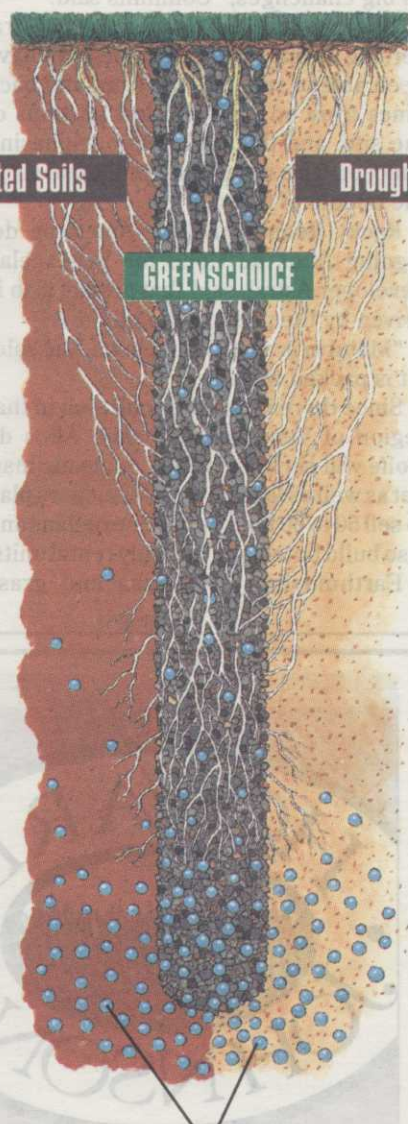
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