

CASTLE ROCK, Colo. — When officials in this small town set out two years ago to build a quality, affordable course for town residents, they hired a resident.

They hired Jim Engh, whose first U.S. project, The Sanctuary, was *Golf Digest's* choice as 1997 Best New Private Course.

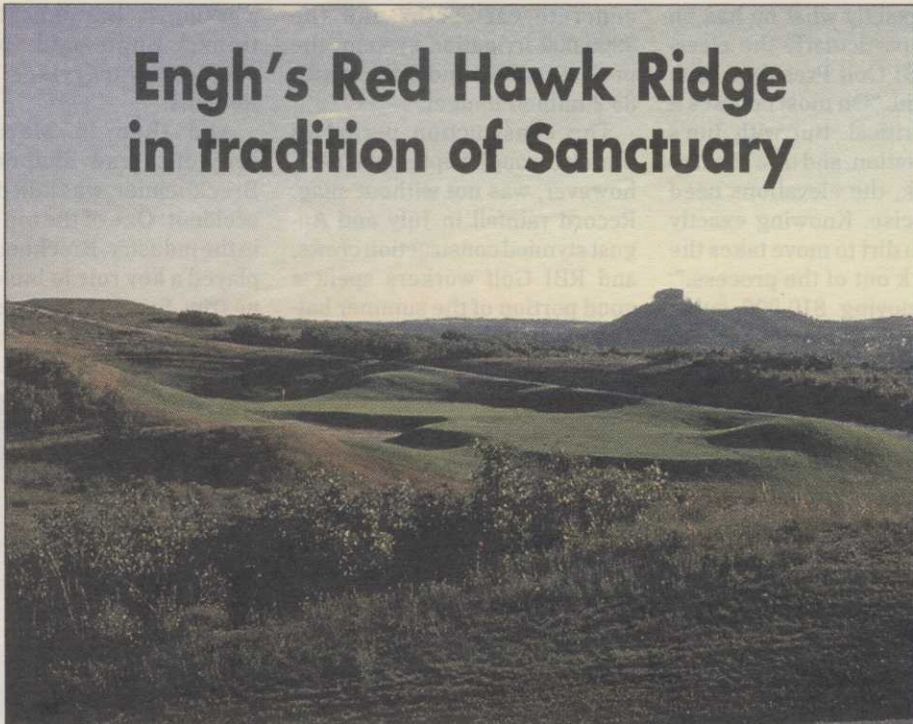
The 6,800-yard, par-72 Red Hawk Ridge was completed last summer, although the town has elected to hold off on its opening until April to allow for a longer growth period.

While Castle Rock, with 16,000 residents, lies just 25 miles south of Denver, its setting along the Rocky Mountain Front Range offered several prime course sites. Situated in the seat of Douglas County, the United States' fastest-growing county per capita, the Castle Rock course is expected to help fill the relative void of high-quality, affordable golf in south metro Denver.

The town had the luxury of choosing from four sites for its course. Engh developed a 12-point evaluation system for the selection process, ranking each piece of ground on elements like topography, general character, playability, location and construction cost.

"It was fun developing a system to evaluate the different sites," Engh said. "Rarely do you get that many quality options."

Engh's Red Hawk Ridge in tradition of Sanctuary



Architect Jim Engh had plenty of natural beauty to use in designing Red Hawk Ridge.

While it didn't win every category, the Red Hawk Ridge site emerged as the top choice, with its highest marks coming in topography and location. U.S. Home Corp. dedicated to Castle Rock the rugged 200 acres for the course as part of its

600-home development project.

The course features panoramic views of the Rockies to the west, and the 14,000-foot-high Pikes Peak to the south. Its natural character is rough terrain, scenic ridges and native stands

of mature scrub oak.

Topographic constraints have kept homes from being built on the last five holes, and cart paths were designed within the grading plan to maintain reasonable slopes.

"Most of the site's topographic changes and valleys already met the proportions for what the golf course needed," Engh said. "We were able to use the valleys as a starting point for a lot of the holes."

The course sets up for public play, with generous fairways bordered by distinct, native-grass rough typical of the southern Front Range. The brown hues of the native areas are preserved using a costly yet water-efficient perimeter irrigation design.

Red Hawk's difficulty, however, comes from its terrain, with a 400-foot elevation change. The landscape helped dictate the design, allowing much of the site's natural foothill characteristics to remain intact.

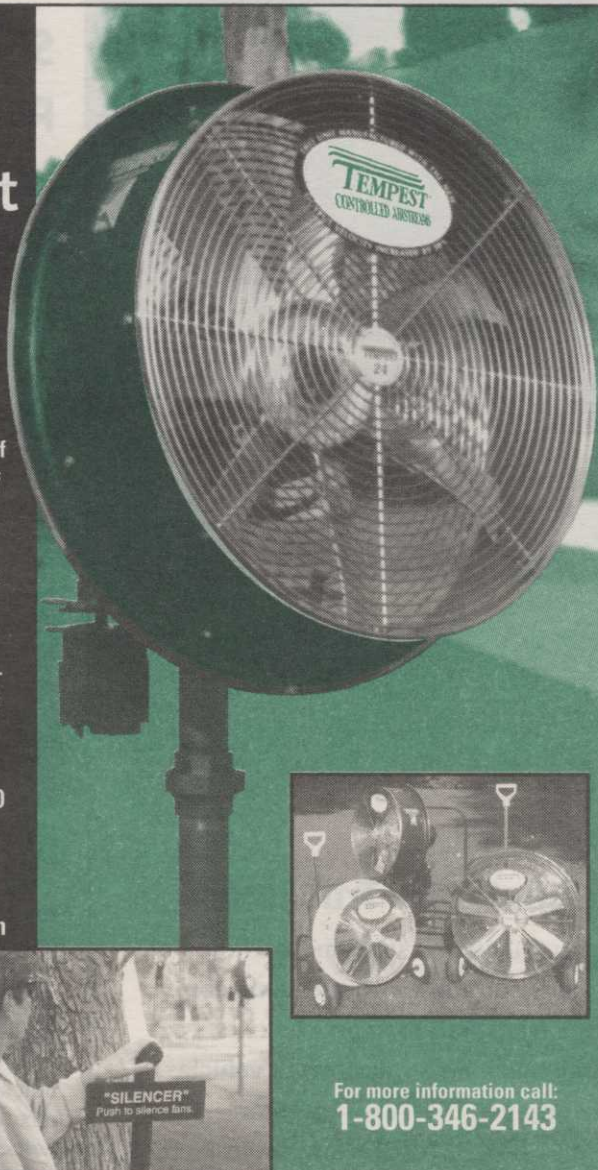
Most of the holes play downhill, including the 190-yard, par-3 No. 14. It's built along Red Hawk's highest bluff, playing down to the green carved into a steep hillside, and lined with a ribbon bunker on the front left. Special attention was given to the design of the hole, in keeping with Castle Rock's development regula-

Continued on page 64

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Red Hawk Ridge

Continued from page 63

tions, which are aimed at preserving natural ridge lines.

While working in Colorado's foothills, detailed documentation in extreme areas is essential. And the Red Hawk Ridge contractor, RBI Golf Inc. of Littleton, made sure not to stray from Engh's plans in the field.

"We knew Jim expected us to

build to exactly what he had on the plan, particularly the elevations," RBI Golf President Rich Maher said. "On most courses it isn't as critical. But with Jim's documentation, and on a site like Red Hawk, the elevations need to be precise. Knowing exactly how much dirt to move takes the guesswork out of the process."

After moving 810,000 cubic yards of soil, laying \$300,000 in sod and installing USGA greens,

concrete cart paths and the \$900,000 irrigation system, the project came in under the town's \$3.2 million budget.

The construction period of March through September 1997, however, was not without snag. Record rainfall in July and August stymied construction crews, and RBI Golf workers spent a good portion of the summer battling continual erosion problems.

"RBI did an exceptional job

working in the difficult conditions," Engh said, praising project supervisor Craig Robbins.

And then in March, the project's lead shaper, Dave Breckheimer, was killed in a car accident. One of the top shapers in the industry, Breckheimer had played a key role in building the nearby Sanctuary. A memorial for Breckheimer will be placed near the No. 8 green.

The course's modified double-loop layout allowed U.S. Home more frontage for its development, and drainage and other design features were incorporated into the design plan to accommodate the development's future construction.

"I think Jim really understands how to balance the economic constraints and needs of a development with the aesthetic and design considerations that go into building a golf course," U.S. Home Colorado Division President Jeff Whiton said.

Western Golf Properties has been chosen to manage the course. Although the fee structure has not been set, Hugh Edgman of Western Golf said he thinks the town will have no problem meeting its objective of providing a premiere, affordable golf experience to its residents.

"The design is far superior to what one normally thinks of in a municipal course," said Edgman, whose firm manages more than 90 courses. "It feels more like a private or high-end daily-fee course. The views are outstanding, and I think it will avail itself to all caliber of players."

South Hadley picks Maurer

SOUTH HADLEY, Mass. — A team headed by the Howard Maurer Design Group has been selected to provide golf course design and permitting services for a new 18-hole golf facility to be built by the town of South Hadley.

Construction on the course is scheduled to begin in the spring on a 240-acre town-owned property off Alvord Street.

Members of the design team include Maurer; Mike Toohill of ENSR of Northboro (environmental and permitting services); Pat Sheridan of Tighe & Bond of Westfield (project engineers and surveyors); Brian Vincenzi of Irrigation Consulting and Engineering of Pepperell (irrigation system design); and Dr. William Torello, director of the Turf Program at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst.

The Maurer design team is in the process of permitting the golf course. According to Maurer, "The course will be around 6,700 yards and will include full practice facilities. We are trying to use the natural features of the land to their fullest extent. There is a fantastic mix of uphill and downhill holes. Some holes will have spectacular views of Mt. Tom."

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In addition to the South Hadley Golf Course, Maurer has the first nine of 18 holes under construction at Templewood (Mass.) Golf Course. Templewood's opening is slated for late summer.



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