

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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No Mas, No Mess

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THE DYNAMIC DUO OF PINEHURST NO. 2
PINEHURST, N.C. — Paul Jett, No. 2 Course superintendent (left), and Bradley Kocher, director of golf course maintenance, have kept cool heads in their preparation for this year's U.S. Open. See *Super Focus*, page 13.

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Ojai reclaims one of world's best par-3s

OJAI, Calif. — An ambitious project to renovate Ojai Valley Inn & Spa's George C. Thomas-designed course will return two signature holes that have been "lost" for over a half-century, including one which was hailed as one of the world's best par-3s.

"We have an extraordinary opportunity to preserve a piece of history," said the inn's director of golf, Mark Greenslit. "Our classic course is reclaiming two of its most unique and beautiful holes."

The terrain of these two holes is so spectacular that PGA Tour great, historian and course designer Ben Crenshaw said, "This shot is going to be once again one of the best shots in golf."

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NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Fully autonomous, 'intelligent' mower tackles turf in Fla.

By ANDREW OVERBECK

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Engineers at the University of Florida's Mechanical Engineering School have developed a fully automated robotic fairway mower that may very well revolutionize golf course maintenance. The unit, which utilizes a Global Positioning System (GPS), sonar sensors and five on-board pentium computers is truly a "smart mower," according to engineer David Armstrong.

"This has a large platform with a lot of intelligence," said Armstrong. "I've taken it out and let it run for three or four hours and it stays within an inch or two of where we want it to be."

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Nation's eyes on board ruling

BY COVER PHOTO

The National Environmental Board is sitting on a decision that could affect golf course development nationwide.

"This is a very important decision," says Dr. Richard O'Connell of the University of Massachusetts Department of Planning and Urban Development.

At the heart of the debate is the 1996 National Environmental Board's decision to require that all new golf courses be designed to meet the same standards as existing courses.

That ruling was expected to be the last word.

But now, after a year of public hearings and a series of court challenges, the board is still undecided.

The board's decision will have a major impact on the golf course industry and on the environment.

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that would require a new construction, local, end-use, water, design, and other factors to be considered in the decision-making process.

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Insurance spreading nationwide

BY MARK LESLIE

A recent study by the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) shows that the number of golf courses insured has increased significantly in the past few years.

The study found that the number of golf courses insured has increased from 1,000 in 1995 to 1,500 in 1998.

The study also found that the average cost of insurance for a golf course has increased from \$10,000 in 1995 to \$15,000 in 1998.

The study also found that the average size of a golf course insured has increased from 100 acres in 1995 to 150 acres in 1998.

The study also found that the average number of golf courses insured per state has increased from 10 in 1995 to 15 in 1998.

The study also found that the average number of golf courses insured per country has increased from 10 in 1995 to 15 in 1998.

The study also found that the average number of golf courses insured per city has increased from 10 in 1995 to 15 in 1998.

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SunCor on fire in the Southwest

By PETER BLAIS

PHOENIX — Things are heating up here in the Valley of the Sun for SunCor Resort & Golf Management Inc.

The Phoenix-based subsidiary of SunCor Development Co. is building 45 holes of golf in the Phoenix area, 18 in St. George, Utah, and operating another 108 holes scattered between four greater Phoenix-area properties.

Among the properties under construction are:

- A Hale Irwin-designed 18-hole executive course called The Lakes Course and a nine-hole pitch 'n putt layout across Litchfield Road from the Art Hills-designed Palm Valley Golf Club, which SunCor

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MILLER/GRAVES & PASCUZZO COMBINE EFFORTS AT THE BRIDGES

SAN RAMON, Calif. — The Bridges at Gale Ranch, a daily-fee golf course designed by Johnny Miller Design and Graves & Pascuzzo Limited, has taken a step closer to opening with the recent hiring of superintendent Mike Orren. Inspired by Royal Dornoch in Scotland, the course features a 16,000-square-foot, three-tiered green. Pictured above is the 13th green. The course is due to open late fall.

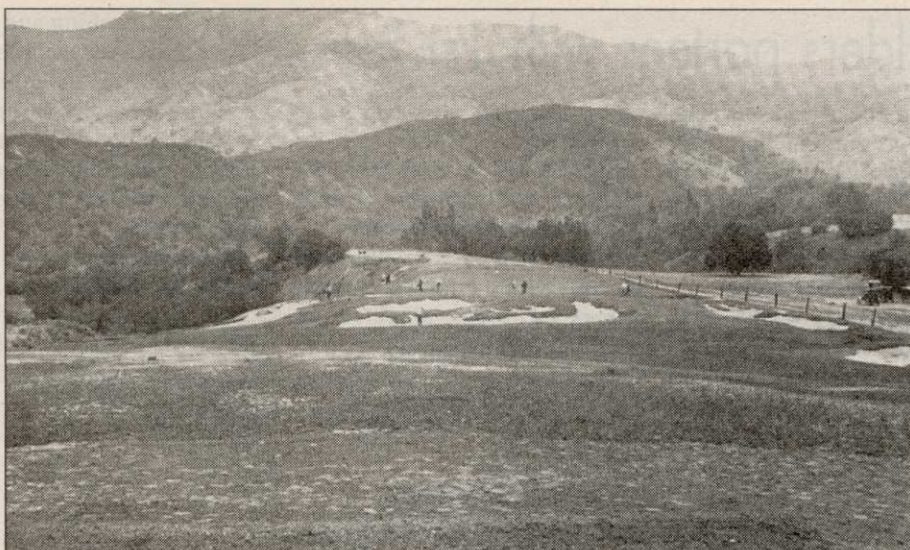
Ojai Valley reclaiming great Thomas par-3

Continued from page 1

Built in 1923 by the legendary Thomas, the Ojai course was immediately hailed as "the cream of Southern California golf courses." During World War II, the U.S. Army took over the resort as a training camp, stationing 1,000 troops here from 1942-44. The U.S. Navy occupied the resort as an "R&R" facility for officers from 1944-45.

Before returning the property to private ownership at the end of the war, the government sold off the last of the Quonset huts and platform tents that had occupied the front nine of the course, and attempted to restore the links.

Unfortunately, it did not rebuild it according to Thomas' original design. Today's holes No. 2 and 5 replaced two holes originally positioned along the edges of the property. One of these holes, the original 3rd, was known to be one of Thomas' favorite par-3s and was built to resemble the famous 3rd hole at Pine



Ojai Valley Golf Club's famous 190-yard 3rd hole is being reclaimed. The semi-punch-bowl green has a deep ravine at the left and out of bounds at the immediate right.

Valley Golf Club.

The Ojai hole was featured in three golf course architecture books: *Golf Architecture in America* by Thomas, *The Captain* by Geoff Shakelford, and *The Links* by Thomas Hunter.

Today, more than 50 years since these holes were lost and forgotten, careful research by Greenslit has brought them once again to light. Using old photographs in Thomas' book, he found the

precise location of the original 3rd and 4th holes.

Ben Crenshaw and Greenslit agree on the merits of re-introducing the "lost holes."

Reconstruction on the two lost holes (which will become Nos. 7 and 8) has begun, and an opening date is planned for late fall. Ultimately, the front and back nines will be switched, improving the overall balance of the course.

O'Meara excited, searching for personal style

Continued from page 35

courses. Also, in golf tournaments and pro-ams I get to play with amateurs quite often, so I get to see what would work on a golf course for different players. That experience is invaluable to being able to design courses that everyone enjoys playing. If anything I will probably lean that way because the majority of the tourna-

In the modern era, Tom Fazio, Pete Dye, Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer have all done wonderful courses and are the people that I have learned the most from.'

ments that I've won have been pro-ams, like the Disney and AT&T. I enjoy the company of my amateur partners I would definitely want the golf course to be playable for all handicaps.

GCN: Which architects have provided you with inspiration?

O'Meara: When you look at the greats in the game when it comes to architectural work—Tillinghast, Mackenzie—the things that were great is that they got to work with really tremendous pieces of property. As we go along, land is more expensive and some of the sites today are not as dramatic and nice as they used to be.

Into the modern era, Tom Fazio, Pete Dye, Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer have all done wonderful courses and are the people that I have learned the most from. At Augusta this year, I saw Tom Fazio and he told me that if I needed any help that I could feel free to call him. He is a class individual. If it wasn't me and I was doing a development, Tom Fazio would be the first on my list.

GCN: How do you respond to the animosity of other designers towards signature designs?

O'Meara: There is a lot of competition out there. For me, it is not my only form of making a living, it is more of a childhood dream. I'm a golf course architect, more so from the knowledge that I've got from playing courses. Let's face it, I don't have an architectural degree. But people that know me know that I'm an organized person. I know that it is a big business and that it isn't easy. That's why I'm taking it slowly and making sure that the Grandview course will be very special.

GCN: Will there be an "O'Meara" style?

O'Meara: That is something that will develop over time. As a new designer, I have to first look at the site and look at the character of the site. Then I have to make it fit by asking myself, what kind of course could this be? But I haven't gotten to the point where I have one fixed idea of a direction that I want to go in. I'd rather go and work with the land and see how to get the best 18 holes in. When I play golf, I like to play a course that has unique and distinct holes, and is yet still playable. So when I get done playing the holes, they stick in your mind. Golfers are going to spend 4-5 hours out there, so they should be able to take in the aesthetic beauty.

GCN: What are you working with at the Grandview site?

O'Meara: They gave us the option of building on some of the best places on the 850-acre site. You have a lot of foliage, a tremendous amount of rock, some water and dramatic elevation changes. There will be some great waterfalls and other water features.

GCN: What kind of challenges will the site present?

O'Meara: We will be doing some blast-

ing, but we are going to try and work around it. We will also have to work around marshland to keep all that environmentally intact. The site is good, there is no reason to disturb it.

GCN: What kind of design team have you put together?

O'Meara: I'll be working with Brit Stenson, who has been in the business for about 25 years. With his knowledge

'There is a lot of [course design] competition out there. For me, it is not my only form of making a living, it is more of a childhood dream.'

and my eye we are going to do something good together.

GCN: How will you fit design work in with your playing schedule?

O'Meara: Brit and I are going to talk as much as possible and I am going to try and visit the site as often as possible in each part of construction to make sure that we are going in the right direction. I go through Toronto a lot this year playing in different events. I will be up there five to eight times at least. If I am anywhere near the place I am going to stop in and see what's going on.

GCN: In ten years, how many O'Meara design courses will be out there?

O'Meara: In the next two years I will compete at a good clip and then I'll be 44 years old and my playing commitments will start to taper off. Then, I will get more into design, but right now I will take on two to three per year. I will balance it right now to make sure that this is something that I really want to do. Internationally, I'm looking at doing some courses in Ireland, and new designs may be materializing in California, Florida and Utah.

RYANGOLF BUSY ON PROJECTS

BONITA SPRINGS, Fla. — RyanGolf is renovating the greens for Bonita Bay Properties on its Marsh Course here. The renovation and original layout was designed by Arthur Hills. Plans call for construction to be completed in late summer. Meanwhile, RyanGolf has been awarded the construction and site development for US Home Golf Course Community's Cedar Hammock in Naples. Designed by Paul Azinger and Gordon Lewis, the 18-hole course will be the centerpiece of a new community. Construction started in April, with completion scheduled for November.

Photo courtesy of Sleeping Bear Press

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