

New community built around old Dye layout

By MARK LESLIE

RICHMOND HILL, Ga. — What is being hailed as an “unplayed Pete Dye course” is the cornerstone of a new luxury second-home community here.

Called Ford Plantation, the 1,800-acre property is the former winter residence of Henry Ford and a one-time rice plantation dating to the 1750s. The 18-hole course, whose name has been changed from Sterling Bluff to Ogeechee Golf Club, was designed by Dye in 1983 on commission by Saudi Arabian physician Ghaith Pharaon.

Pharaon, who had just bought the plantation, anticipated building a golf community, but that never happened.

“Basically, it [course] was a PGA club-caliber course with a member of one,” said Chip Dolan, one of the plantation’s managing partners.

Dye fashioned the track for \$11 million and only a handful of people ever played it, mostly employees of Pharaon’s resort man-

agement company, Inter Reditec.

The back nine of the course was built in the middle of antebellum rice fields. Ford had turned those into lettuce fields in the 1930s, but Dye added 1.2 million cubic yards of earth and transformed them into “a virtual island of Scottish moors,” the owners say.

Dye said of the course in April, “It is a very good golf course” and one of his finest Southern designs.

When the current ownership took over Ford Plantation, Dye began about six months of work on the course, shaving the tops off and recontouring all the greens before regrassing them.

A number of trees that had grown up on the back nine were cut down and cart paths were removed to fit the Scottish look.

But Dye left the fairways and all but two of the bunkers as they stood.

The par-72, 7,100-yard course lays over 261 acres, flowing around an additional 248 acres of freshwater lakes. Dye originally dug five lakes on the front nine, in-

cluding 55-acre Lake Sterling, and 14 of the 18 holes are on water.

Saying the course puts a premium on approach shots, Dolan said the practice facility recreates some of those shots to target greens.

There will be fewer than 60 properties on the golf course, and none on the back nine, “which would ruin the Scottish look,” Dolan said.

Phelps awarded Colo. project

DELTA, Colo. — Richard M. Phelps, Ltd. has been awarded the contract to design an 18-hole golf course for the city of Delta.

Sitting 40 miles southeast of Grand Junction, which is on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains, the site is approximately 240 acres and consists of two distinct types of topography. The southwest portion is relatively flat, with scattered native vegetation but still maintaining views of the surrounding San Juan Mountain range. Bisecting the site is a 60-foot ledge that leads into the northeast portion of the property, which has “fascinating and constantly moving terrain,” said Rick Phelps. “The northeast quadrant has very unique topography and vegetation. We are very excited about this project to prove once again that it is possible to design great golf courses with relatively few dollars. I like to call it ‘responsible architecture.’”

Phelps plans to take advantage of the large acreage dedicated to the course to design wide, rolling, playable fairways creating multiple options on several of the golf holes. Requiring the golfers to think and properly position themselves to attack the large bentgrass greens, is a high priority. The course will also feature a system of ponds connected by rocky streams, created wetlands, strategic bunkering and other land forms. The practice area will include a large range, putting green and short-game pitching and chipping green.



We never said you wouldn't see unattractive spots on your course. They just won't be dollar spots.