



Bahamas draws big names

By TREVOR W. JACKSON

NASSAU, Bahamas — Not since the 1960s has the Bahamas experienced the attention of the world's leading golf course designers — until now. Back then, Dick Wilson, Joe Lee, Gardner Dickenson and Robert Trent Jones Sr. were among those leaving their mark on these sun-splashed cays and islands. Today's golf course developments are being designed by Tom Weiskopf, Greg Norman and Robert Trent Jones Jr., ushering in a new age of golf on spectacular oceanside property from Grand Bahama to Paradise Island and to the Exumas.

Weiskopf has two projects in hand, the Island Club on Great Exuma and the Atlantis Resort Course at Paradise Island. Jones is working towards a June opening of his Reef Course at Lucayan Resort on Grand Bahama, making 36 holes available to guests of this destination resort.

The Lucayan Country Club's original 1962 Wilson layout continues to attract players from around the world, hosted by Director of Golf Gary Slatter. The Reef Course is being built on the site of an earlier course and is Jones' first effort in the Bahamas. His father's Cotton Bay Golf Course opened in the early 1960s, attracting Shell's Wonderful World of Golf to record a great match between Arnold Palmer and Julius Boros. Today, Cotton Bay remains open for play, but the resort hotel is no longer open waiting for re-development.

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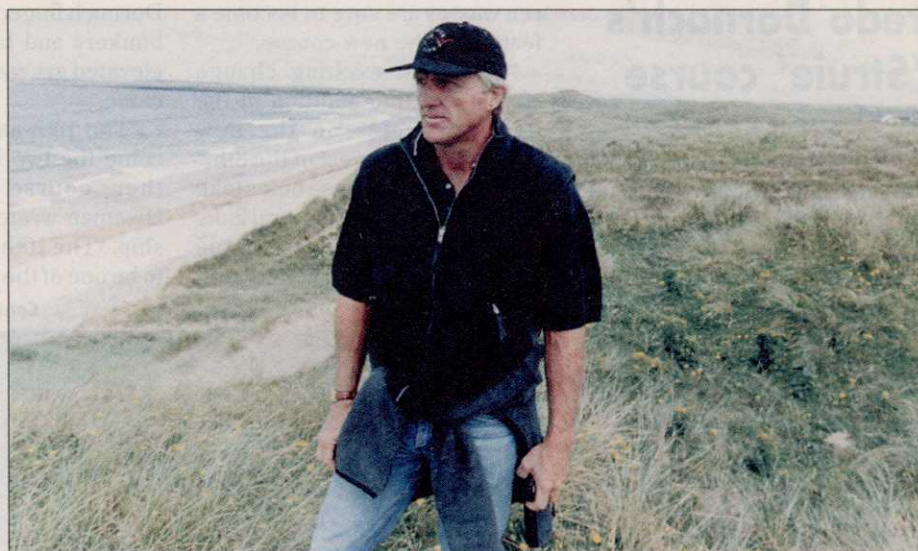
Returning the Olde World to the Olde World

By MARK LESLIE

DOONBEG, County Clare, N. Ireland — Greg Norman is so enthralled with the property that he had been on site four times before ground was broken in December. His senior designer, Jason McCoy, had been here seven times to walk the land and route the 18-hole golf course for Shannon Development and Landmark International.

"Doonbeg is 100 times the site of the Ocean Course [in Kiawah Island, S.C.]," said McCoy, who worked on the Ocean Course with architect Pete Dye. "It has 1-1/2 miles on the ocean and the dunes are 100 feet versus 10 feet at Kiawah. It's an unbelievable links site."

Norman and McCoy have "routed, rerouted and rerouted it again," McCoy said. "Every time, we change a tee or green 20 feet. Every time, we find something even better. We might move just 25,000 square feet of dirt on this project. We will start cutting the fairways just as they are right now."



Greg Norman visits the site of his upcoming golf course in Doonbeg, Northern Ireland.

Norman and McCoy plan to keep Doonbeg "old Irish style — old hard and creeping fescues," McCoy said. "We will not Americanize it in any way."

Flann Quilligan is working on the

project with Shannon Development, which has formed a joint venture with Landmark International. They hope to finish Doonbeg by mid-2000 and open it in 2001.

Fream-Dale Golfplan rolling round the globe

By ANDREW OVERBECK

SANTA ROSA, Calif. — Newly renamed Fream-Dale Golfplan based here is rolling into 2000 with two courses set to open and new projects on the books and in the works. The firm's two openings this year prove there are still fabulous sites available for golf development.

Bonari Kogen Golf Club in Numajiri, Japan, which sits in the hills northwest of Tokyo, is slated to open June 3. Aiming to bring the course into the market as the best in Japan, the project owner opted to let the course grow in for an entire year.

"The course was ready to open last May," said senior architect, David Dale. "They took a year to work on their maintenance practices and make sure their soil chemistry is balanced. As a result, it looks magnificent."

According to Dale, the most dramatic hole on the course is the par-5 3rd that runs along a canyon ridge and features views of the inactive Mt. Bandai volcano. "You can cut the corner off the tee," he said. "But it is a 260-yard drive to cross the canyon. It is a gutsy shot."

Also set to open in June is Sparrebusch Golf Resort in Knysna, South Africa. Nine holes opened this December and Dale expects to have the remaining nine shaped and seeded by the end of January.



The Dale- and Fream-designed Sparrebusch Golf Resort in Knysna, South Africa.

The course sits along the Indian Ocean, the estuaries of Knysna and is adjacent to an indigenous forest.

As a result, it took nine months to get the regulatory approvals. All the work was worth it in the end, said Dale. "These are both sites that you'd give your two front teeth for."

Fream and Dale will also be busy in Southeast Asia in the coming months.

In Korea, the firm is working the Nine Bridges Golf Club on Cheju Island and Dale is doing the grading plans for another course at Yong Pyong Re-

sort. Movement is also possible at Sun Chon Country Club in Kwang Ju, a course that the firm first looked at 2-1/2 years ago.

In Singapore, Fream and Dale will be renovating the Sentosa Golf Club in Serapong that Fream designed in the late 1970's. The course will be getting a full-scale facelift, according to Dale. "It has been in the ground for 20 years," he said. "And we will be retweaking the course, flashing out the bunkers, etc. On a course that has mature vegetation it will make for real fun architecture."

New Golf Unlimited eyes German growth

By TREVOR LEDGER

ÖSTRINGEN-TIEFENBACH, Germany — Some of the golf industry's most experienced professionals in Germany have joined in a partnership designed to handle a golf project from concept to management.

Golf Unlimited is the brainchild of Managing Partner Christian Bohn, formerly a project manager with Paragon Construction and now the representative of Nicklaus Design in Europe.

"I don't think that anyone else in Europe has put together such a committed

team in order to actualize such a concept," said Bohn.

The 36-hole, Tony Jacklin-designed project at Stifterhof, south of Heidelberg, is the first to benefit from the formation of Golf Unlimited. The company has already successfully negotiated the planning phase, and building will commence this year. The multi-skilled nature of Golf Unlimited is highlighted by the ease of planning consent at Stifterhof.

While each new project receives individually chosen team members, project managers, superintendents and shapers,

etc., a more permanent team of core partners has been established to ensure that reputable and acclaimed professionals are involved at every stage of the development — be it a small-scale renovation or full-blown resort project, Bohn said.

Key members include Nicklaus Design, Weitz Golf International, J.L. Pierrmann International Associates and Michael Redd Associates, all of whom are based in Florida, USA. Between them, they are responsible for some of the highest quality and famous golf courses in the world, including The London Golf Club in En-



Christian Bohn



Mark van der Looy

gland, Muirfield Village Golf Club and Kiawah Island in the United States, and the Hyatt Regency Resort in Abu Dhabi.

It is this recognizable quality that Bohn believes will bring success for Golf Unlimited. "We know that there is a need in

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Seychelles' Lemuria project shaping up for Wright

By ANDREW OVERBECK

PRASLIN ISLAND, the Seychelles — The Lemuria Course here in the Seychelles is shaping up nicely and is on track for its 2000 opening, according to designer Rodney Wright.

"Things have gone remarkably smoothly considering the fact that there were many unknown site conditions when construction started," said Wright.

"We have had a few surprises, both good and bad. For example, while excavating one of the main lakes, we encountered mud where we expected to find pure sand to use for filling the fairways. But we have also not encountered much bedrock or immovable rock which would have required blasting."

French golf construction company Benedetti, which has worked extensively in France and Italy, has been hard at work on the site with equipment that was shipped in from France.

Another Frenchman, European Tour player Marc Farry, has added to Wright's design along the way.

"Marc is one of the longest hitters on the European Tour," said Wright. "But he never loses perspective of the capabilities of the average player. He has offered very down-to-earth, common-sense advice."

One of the highlights of the par-70 course is the 15th hole, which is under construction. From the tee, there are unforgettable views of the Indian Ocean, with the green nestled 183 feet below in the Anse Georgette Valley.

Lemuria's front nine is scheduled to open in July and the full 18 is due to open in September.



Rodney Wright stands on the elevated tee of the par-3 15th hole at Lemuria Resort on Praslin Island in the Seychelles.

Golf Unlimited

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Europe for a company that can take a project to the highest standard from start to finish," he said. "Having gathered the leading forces from the market, we can now ensure top-class results throughout Europe."

However, this is not an "exclusive" arrangement. In fact, Bohn pointed out that: "Our clients are investors and architects. We



don't only work with Nicklaus but have, in the past, been involved with such architects as Dave Thomas, Kurt Rossknecht, Robert von Hagge and Peter Harradine."

Bohn's operations director and partner is Mark van der Looy, owner and manager of golf course construction company Golf Project Management (GPM), as well as having served for five years as construction manager for Southern Golf GmbH. Both van der Looy and Bohn are keen to emphasize the "seamless coordination throughout the life of the project," and not just for those clients who take on the "full service" that Golf Unlimited offers. The widespread, network nature of the partnership means that customized teams can be assembled to slot in with existing professionals involved with the project.

Indeed, van der Looy and Bohn are continuing with their other commitments to GPM and Nicklaus Design, respectively, and that is where the "secret" of the "one-stop shop" lies, Bohn said, "adaptability." ▴



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