

Bahamas goes big-time

Continued from page 61

PARADISE ISLAND

Atlantis Resort on Paradise Island has re-defined Bahamas' tourism since being taken over by South African hotel magnate Sol Kerzner. With the grand opening of the Royal Towers at Atlantis last season, the re-design of the Paradise Island Golf Course was inevitable. The Wilson layout opened as the "Arawak Country Club" in 1962, with owner Huntington Hartford at the helm. Gary Player was brought in as professional, along with Pancho Gonzalez and Pablo Segura on the tennis courts at the Ocean Club. Hog Island was still the name, although Paradise Beach was beginning to sound right to the "Thunderball" James Bond movie fans who flocked to see Sean Connery in the 1964 blockbuster filmed on the island's deserted beaches and lagoons.

Weiskopf will have a beautiful site to work on: the whole east end of Paradise Island, with nonstop ocean views and swaying palms. By closing the small airport and developing bayfront condominium residences, the course and surrounding beaches may become prized golf resorts.

THE ISLAND CLUB

Further south in the chain of islands known as the Exumas, Weiskopf is moving on the Island Club's 18-hole private resort project. A few miles from Georgetown, which sits right on the Tropic of Cancer, the Island Club is attracting a lot of attention for its unique get-away-from-it-all luxury concept. No crowds, no gambling, no hotels, no cruise

Trevor W. Jackson is an international golf development consultant, based in North Palm Beach, Fla. A founding member of the Bahamas Golf Association in 1964 he is always active in the Bahamas and the Caribbean.



Greg Noman-designed Grand Exuma's 15th hole is complete (inset), while crews work to finish the rest.

ships, just top-class service in a private residential club setting. Members can purchase estate lots, build custom homes for private residential living, or take advantage of the club's residential shared ownership plan for those who want to be at their club 30 or 60 days a year.

The Island Club boasts views to Stocking Island to the east and sunsets overlooking the famed western bone fishing flats. The club's private Citation jet runs members out of Miami for the one-hour flight to Georgetown. This fantasy island will be fully operational by spring 2001, and real estate is selling fast.

EMERALD BAY

Norman's design is also under construction on Great Exuma, where the Emerald Bay Resort is taking shape. Emerald Bay's crescent-shaped beach will provide the backdrop for a destination resort offering a 5-star hotel, marina, golf and real estate. As a destination resort, Emerald Bay will provide a full range of resort activities to keep hotel guests active during their vacation.

Salt-tolerant grasses are already being sprigged on several fairways and will have

plenty of growth in time as the resort will not be open for another 12 to 18 months. Projects of this magnitude take lots of money, time and care to bring to a grand opening. As the date approaches, golfers will be planning their own "shark attacks" on these family island fairways.

BAHAMAS GOLF FEDERATION

Amateur golf in the Bahamas is administered by the B.G.F. under the leadership of volunteers. With the various clubs spread out over the half-dozen islands where golf is available, the B.G.F. provides a vital service to bring United States Golf Association and Royal & Ancient standards to the Bahamas. While some courses have fallen into disrepair or have folded, the future of Bahamas' golf for residents and visitors is bright.

The opportunities for golf course architects, builders, irrigation, grass and agronomy experts are many, and club operators, management and resort marketing firms are negotiating their deals. When the planned projects are complete, the Bahamas will have more than 12 golf courses for their 300,000 population and 3 million visitors to enjoy. ▶

Caribbean leaders put golf high on priority list

By TREVOR W. JACKSON

MIAMI — As tourism continues to grow in the Caribbean and Latin America, smaller island governments and British-dependent territories are looking to resort hotels, and golf, as a life-saving replacement for bananas and other agricultural products.

This was the consensus from seven heads of state and a number of others gathered at the third year Miami Conference on the Caribbean and Latin America, held here in December. More than 1,200 business and political leaders from throughout the Americas and Europe came to set the agenda for the region's economic development in the coming years. From cruise ports, to resort hotels, from health care to electric power, 14 country exhibitions, and 75 corporate exhibitors took over the Intercontinental Hotel for a week in early December.

The direction toward development of resort hotels and golf is almost inevitable as each small island nation and the Central American Latin nations improve their tourism infrastructure with new airports and cruise ports. The burgeoning cruise industry, in particular, needs onshore activities for its passengers, and golf is high on the list.

The trend of new destination golf resorts is underway throughout the region. In Barbados, for example, where Tom Fazio has 36 holes being built at Sandy Lane in a multimillion-dollar redevelopment, it will join the Royal Westmoreland layout by Robert T. Jones Jr. The Bahamas has Greg Norman, Tom Weiskopf and Robert Trent Jones Jr. designs being turned into reality. Robert von Hagge's White Witch golf course near Montego Bay in Jamaica is expected to open in June. Anguilla's tiny island is looking for a golf course to go with its upscale tourism product and financial services network.

Puerto Rico has 16 courses now and at least two more coming on stream. The Dominican Republic, which is home to Pete Dye's classic Teeth of the Dog layout, is getting another Dye course, and other developers are talking to course architects to see what they need to do to attract the golfing tourist.

On the Caribbean coasts of Belize, Cancun (Mexico), and Isla de Margarita (Venezuela) more golf is on the way.

And already golfers are teeing it up in the A-B-C islands (Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao), where Tierra del Sol is attracting many knowledgeable golfers.

CUBAN REVOLUTION OF GOLF

Even Cuba's Varadero resort island 60 miles east of Havana was the location of a European PGA Tour event last October. While the U.S. embargo remains in force, Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom and Spain, among other countries, are going ahead with Cuban tourism plans, and golf is certain to be a part of it. While it may seem strange to some, it is not impossible that the Havana Open, an event that Arnold Palmer and Billy Casper once dominated, may return to the pro golf tour.

THE LEADER IN SUB-SURFACE ACTIVATED OXYGEN/AERATION SYSTEMS

Your Water, as Nature Intended It . . .

BEFORE

AFTER

Need we say more?

Call for information on the most cost-effective, bottom-laid aeration equipment for lakes and ponds, and high-output ozone generators for closed-loop, recirculation systems. Proven in 100's of installations!

1-800-556-9251

2615 Meadow St., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401. FAX 805-541-6149
www.epaaeration.com

New Technology for Turf Irrigation

TH₂O

Soil Moisture Meter

- Portable
- Accurate +/-2%
- Quick survey
- Soil moisture Control Chart included

TMLC

Moisture Level Control

- Automatic zone control by soil moisture
- Accurate % water set point
- Adapts to any controller
- Buried sensor

www.dynamax.com

Toll Free: 1-800-896-7108
Fax: 281-564-5200
email: sales@dynamax.com

10808 Fallstone • Suite 350 • Houston, TX 77099