

By ANDREW OVERBECK

BANGKOK, Thailand — Quality Golf Consultants (QGC) has weathered the Asian financial crisis of the past two years, riding a wave of renovation work that is on the rise as the country and the region begin to awaken from their economic slumber.

The company, headed by Tony Taylor, is performing extensive

QGC continues to make inroads into Thailand

renovation work at Alpine Golf Club and has added to its growing list of clients in 1999, snagging a contract at Rajpruek Club in Bangkok.

Taylor's work in Thailand began at Thai Country Club, where he has moved from superintendent to consultant.

"Getting through the storm

has a lot to do with our business management practices," said Taylor. "But having the Thai Country Club as a model maintenance operation made the whole high end of the golf market sit up and take notice."

QGC spent much of 1999 working on the Ron Garl-designed Alpine Golf Club. While the origi-

nal owner spared no expense in constructing the facility and the course, the project was never financially feasible from opening day, Taylor said.

"The course deteriorated considerably in the past five years," said Taylor, who helped prepare it for the 1998 Asian Games.

QGC is now halfway through a

two-stage US\$2 million renovation project. They are installing 15 km of heringbone drainage

and replacing the contaminated Tifdwarf greens with superdwarf

Continued on next page



Tony Taylor

Creative Golf

Continued from page 63

difficulty," he said. "We have had some restrictions on earth movement imposed upon us and it is more likely that we will import soil rather than cut and fill. To establish the dunes, we are planning to drive low, wooden piles into the ground and just allow the sand to blow up against them. As the 'dune' grows we will raise the piles accordingly."

Ironically the only dune-like features that still exist are the concrete bunkers, built as the dunes were being bulldozed.

Marine is being redesigned with new land at the same time as Turnberry's Arran course. Both were flattened for airfields during the war. This similarity has not been lost on Moodie, although it is the Ailsa course at Turnberry, redesigned after the war by MacKenzie Ross, that is Moodie's role model in recreating the links character on Sylt.

The architect has a high regard for the site. "The land has great potential and, from certain angles, bears a similarity to the landscape at Muirfield." He enthused, "Much will depend on the attitude of the local authorities and environmental groups, but we are confident that the environmental benefits can be shown to outweigh the objections."

Tourists do visit Sylt, but the project has been sanctioned by the Marine members primarily for their own benefit. Before the dream can be realized, however, Moodie has the site under close scrutiny.

"There are old asphalt roads to remove, underground tunnels to avoid and the possibility of coming across unexploded bombs," he said.

As yet, no contractors have been hired to build the course.

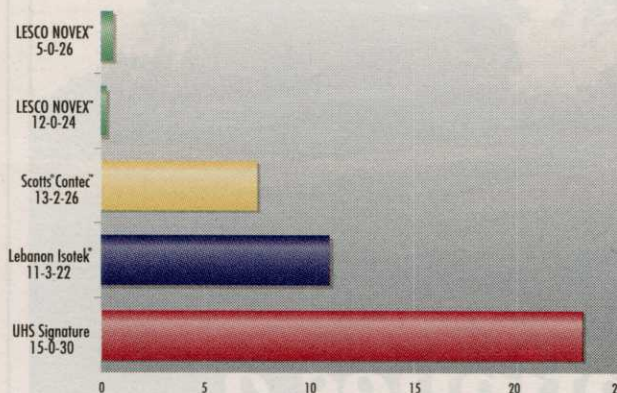
Creative Golf Design has made a positive step towards developing its Latin American interests. David Ross hails from Scotland and is an accomplished golfer who is fluent in Spanish. His appointment to CGD in a Santiago office is designed to provide a first point of contact for potential developers and will grow in stature when Ross completes his current studies with the British Institute of Golf Course Architects in spring 2001. ▴

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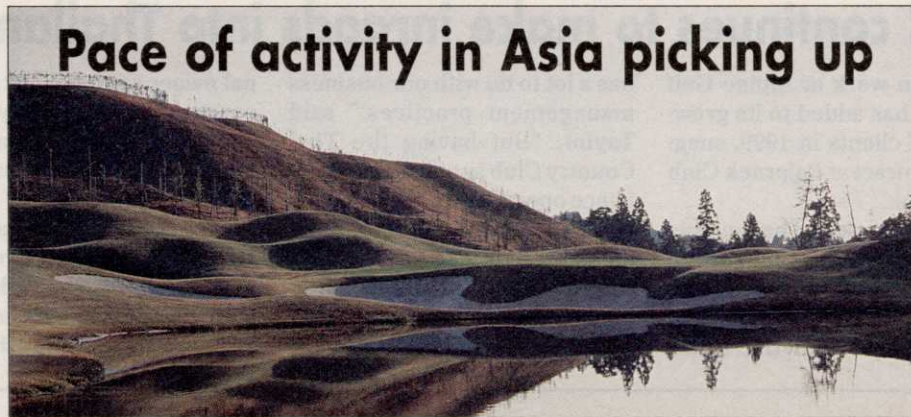
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ASIAN UPDATE

JAPAN

• Tom Johnson Golf Design (TJGD) is busy in Japan, with a new course opening later this year and three renovation projects in the works. TJGD is designing 18 holes in Nagaoka at Green Hill Nagaoka Golf Club and the course is set to open in July.

TJGD's renovation work includes: Washu Golf Club in Kurashiki, adding four new greens and ladies' and seniors' tees, scheduled to be finished in 2001; AMI Golf Club in Ibaraki, an 18-hole renovation of greens to start in the fall; and



The 8th hole at Tom Johnson Golf Design's Green Hill Nagaoka Golf Club in Nagaoka, Japan.

Pace of activity in Asia picking up

Akasaka Country Club, Okayama, an 18-hole renovation to start in the spring.

KOREA

• MT. KUMGANG — The Hyundai Group is looking for foreign companies to take part in its North Korean resort project at Mt. Kumgang. Hyundai received a 30-year monopoly on the use of the property at the end of October. The group is seeking U.S. companies since the Clinton Administration lifted its business embargo on North Korea in September. Hyundai plans to build a hotel, condominium, ski resort, golf course and airport in the Mt. Kumgang region.

MALAYSIA

• E&G Parslow has announced that two of its Malaysian projects will be back on track in 2000. The firm's course in Karambunai, Sabah for Karambunai Resorts has been reactivated. The course is situated in an area of tropical real estate within the city of Sabah, Kota Kinabalu. Construction is set to begin at mid-year.

The second course is in coastal Terengganu on the east coast of Malaysia. Site clearing has begun under the control of Jason Winter, who has been working to ensure the numerous sites of native grasses were left untouched and the general course routing was adjusted to maximum advantage.

PHILIPPINES

• CEBU — In a move to settle the conflict over the redevelopment of the Kang-Irog Golf Course here the developer, Gotesco Land, Inc. has offered to buy the property from the Philippines Tourism Authority (PTA) for P250 million (US\$6.4 million). Development works were put on hold after the Cebu regional trial court issued a temporary restraining order barring the firm from continuing to work on the site.

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Quality Golf

Continued from previous page

Bermudagrass. Taylor's crew has also placed 4 km of plastic curbing around the lake banks to prevent the build-up of aquatic plant growth and the invasion of torpedo grass.

Alpine has upgraded its maintenance facility and purchased a new fleet of equipment. This year's work will include working on the back nine and installing a new Toro LTC plus irrigation system.

QGC also signed on with J. Michael Poellet-designed Rajpruek Club and appointed Robert Barnes as the superintendent. So far, Barnes has upgraded the standard of the course without spending any more money.

"They have over 100 people on staff, but simply had no one who knew how to maintain the golf course," said Taylor. "We have helped to turn that around."

According to Taylor, renovation and consultant work will continue to be on the rise since many clubs don't have educated manpower. "We have the technology and we know what works," said Taylor. "There are still no schools that train for golf operations."

"The renovation work will continue as the market settles out. Golf courses will simply want to improve conditions and reap the rewards from the massive golfing public."