

## BRIEFS

### CUBA PLANS FOR 28 GOLF COURSES

HAVANA, Cuba — The Cuban government may be Communist, but it's not about to let the Caribbean golf boom pass it by. Rumbos, the state-owned company that manages the Varadero Golf Club, will start building a course in Cayo Coco early next year. It has plans for three more courses, once foreign financing is secured. In addition, Cran Caribe, a hotel company, breaks ground on a new course in Jibacoa this September. Several other courses are in the planning stage. The government's short-term goal is to build one course in each of Cuba's nine tourism zones, according to Raul Martin, a Rumbos manager. Long-term plans put the total number of courses at 28. Cuban revolutionaries Fidel Castro and Che Guevara were avid golfers before overthrowing the Batista government in 1959. Among their first moves was to bulldoze nearly all of the island's golf courses to make way for schools.

### RYANGOLF BUILDING NEW NICKLAUS COURSE

DEERFIELD BEACH, Fla. — Ryangolf, based here, has been awarded the construction contract for a new 27-hole Jack Nicklaus-design golf course. The Prestwick Plantation Golf Course will be built in Cape Girardeau, Mo. Construction got under way recently and the layout is expected to open in April 2002.

## The Links at Outlook brings Scottish flavor to Maine

By JOEL JOYNER

SOUTH BERWICK, Maine — Ever since King James IV of Scotland lost 14 shillings to the Earl of Bothwell in a golfing wager back in 1502, the sport of golf has continued to grow — and grow, and grow. It may be a gamble for a new course to open, what with upscale public golf courses proliferating and competing for golfers' attention. But The Links at Outlook, owned and operated by the Flynn family, just might have what it takes by bringing a Scottish touch to Maine.

A onetime dairy farm, the 140-acre property was considered — and even zoned — for an industrial park in the early 1980s, but the creation of a driving range in 1988-89 set in motion a chain of events.

"It just took off from the driving range," said Tim Flynn III, general manager. "We originally intended to place all 18 holes on the east side of Route 4, which would have made for some narrow fairways, but when we bought an additional 30 acres on the other side of the road it really opened up the layout possibilities."

Designed with 11 holes of rolling mounds, fescue grass, and strategically



The outlook from the 17th fairway affords views of the 17th green and the links layout of the front nine.

placed sand bunkers, the east side makes for a challenging but manageable game for the average golfer. The classic style of firm and fast greens and fairways requires cautious drives and fairway play in order to safely reach the greens.

The architect for the course, Brian Silva, said that "the greens can be attacked only from certain areas of the fairways, and the low-handicapper won't score unless he recognizes and finds

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The Ocean Course plays along the cerulean waters of the Atlantic Ocean and Nassau Harbour.

## Weiskopf's Ocean Club nears opening

PARADISE ISLAND, Bahamas — In December, the famed Paradise Island resort, the Ocean Club, will unveil a scenic 18-hole golf course as part of Sun International's \$100-million renovation and expansion of the property. Designed by Tom Weiskopf, the Ocean Club Golf Course has been completed and grassed and will be ready for play by year-end.

Set on the eastern end of the island, Weiskopf's par-72 layout takes advantage of the magnificent Bahamian landscape and island crosswinds, challenging golfers' accuracy. Overlooking the Atlantic Ocean and Nassau Harbour,

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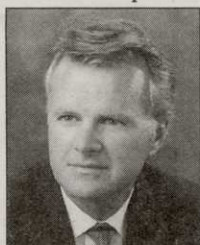


## After forty years, Jim Fazio still designing courses worldwide

SARDINIA, Italy — From a career spanning 40 years, Jim Fazio's designs can be found throughout the United States and in 10 foreign countries. Growing up in the Philadelphia area he learned the business from the ground up working with his uncle, George Fazio, and brother, Tom.

Golf Course News correspondent Trevor Jackson recently met up with Jim to discuss his design philosophy, experiences and ongoing international projects, which include LeMezzane Golf Country in Sardinia, Italy, and the Bahamia Club in Freeport, Bahamas.

GCN: Coral Harbour Golf Club on



Jim Fazio

New Providence in the Bahamas was your first overseas work. What was that like?

**Fazio:** We started that course at Coral Harbour in 1962 for the developer Lindsay Hopkins, the Miami Coca-Cola bottler. I lived at the hotel for two years to build the course. I didn't have any maps or surveys to work from and ran off the property a bit, and we lost a couple of building lots this way. There was a little ridge in there and no topsoil. We crushed the coral rock and dug shallow lakes, testing every day not to take too much out of them to go back to salt water.

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## Meadowbrook National to open this year

LAKELAND, Fla. — Meadowbrook Golf Group, Inc., has announced that its new 27-hole resort course in Las Vegas will be called Meadowbrook National Golf Club.

The new course, scheduled to open before the end of the year, will be marketed nationally and will become a flagship property for Meadowbrook Golf, which owns or manages more than 100 courses across the country.

Meadowbrook National is located about 25 minutes from the heart of the Las Vegas strip. The site adjoins Floyd Lamb State Park and gives unobstructed views of the Sheep Mountains from most of the golf holes. The new golf club is adjacent to the proposed Mountain Spa residential and resort development, but is being developed independently.

The new layout features three championship nines designed by golf architect

Robert Cupp. Each 18-hole combination will play to approximately 6,900 yards from the championship tees. The 24,000-square-foot clubhouse, designed after a Mediterranean villa, will overlook a lake and the finishing holes for all three nine-hole layouts.

Construction of all 27 holes is nearly completed, and the turfgrass has matured to the point where many holes are virtually playable. A company spokesman said the course is expected to be open for play before Christmas, and that reservations are already being accepted for 2001 golf events.

Meadowbrook National is a joint project of Meadowbrook Golf and Apollo Real Estate Investment Fund III. Apollo Real estate is a New York investment firm that also holds a major equity position in Meadowbrook Golf Group, which will operate the club for the partnership.

## Ski resorts adding golf courses

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Fla., and Gatlinburg Skylift in Tennessee.

Boyne general manager Stephen Kircher credits his father and founder Everett Kircher (at 84 still on the job every day) with the idea to give the company a year-round base. The concept was a masterstroke. "The ski industry is tough right now," he said. "We've had three consecutive off winters and those that aren't in four-season operation are going under."

He seconded Legueux's idea that convention business doesn't happen without golf. There's plenty of competition for Boyne. Since The Heather was built in 1965, 57 courses have been built in Michigan.

Kircher summed up the decision for more golf simply: "You can't build another mountain, but you can build another golf course."

### ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH END

Out west, golf is taking on even greater magnitude here in the Rockies.

Jim Thompson, president of Vail Resorts Development Co., cites golf as critical to high-end real estate sales and attracting major hotels for the ski operations. Vail Resorts owns and oper-

ates Vail, Beaver Creek, Keystone, Breckenridge and hospitality assets at Jackson Hole.

Interestingly, the company is building expensive private golf clubs with Tom Fazio and Greg Norman layouts, now under construction at Red Sky, nine miles from Vail. Four hundred memberships will be sold with initiation fees of \$100,000, which will pay the \$40-million cost. The opportunity to join such a club will add \$100,000 to the price of a building lot. As Thompson puts it, "The golf drives the real estate sales and the summer bed base."

Hotels also demand golf. Ritz Carlton is building a 240-room hotel here, and it required golf availability for its guests as a condition. The resort gets more needed beds for skiers.

The Red Sky development is based on the Beaver Creek model, where half the tee times go to members and the rest to guests at Vail. Two club houses will be built, one luxurious for members and the other smaller for guests. The two groups will rotate daily with members playing one course one day and the other the next. The members have their private club and guests have two fine courses to play.

## The Links at Outlook

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those areas with his tee shots."

"The property on [the east] side of the road began as mostly flat land," said Flynn. "It required several shapes and cuts to give it that flowing Scottish feel that complicates some approach shots."

A welcoming supply of rangers and directional flags are available to assist first-timers here with blind shots, such as the 4th hole, a 475-yard par-5. The bunkers don't pose a real threat here, but a misdirected tee shot could be difficult to play against the strategically placed mounds. It may also prove impossible to find a ball, let alone play it, if it lands in the thick, knee-high native grass.

### WEST SIDE STORY

The remaining seven holes, 11 through 17, are reached by traveling under the main road by way of a concrete structured tunnel. Playing these seven – the west side holes – demand an entirely different strategy, as they are situated on and around a wooded hill in the more traditional style of a New England golf course.

The west side design required more cuts and excavations, but the outcome appears promising. Reaching the 12th tee on top of the hill, one may turn around and admire the strategic shaping Brian Silva has accomplished over on the east side. Then it is followed by another impressive panoramic view off the 13th tee that overlooks part of the town of South Berwick. Of course, the tee shot itself is a blind downhill drive on a 361-yard par-4 from the blue markers.

After the 11th hole, there are no more water hazards to contend with, but other obstacles present themselves. Course superintendent John Roesser, CGCS, explained that there's been some erosion

that has affected parts of holes 15 and 16 from the unusually heavy summer rains; he added rocks and topsoil to provide support. Repositioning of tees is also being considered as a means to reduce erosion effects.

Although the openness of the more traditional links-style holes on the east side of the course warns golfers to take heed of the wind factor in their strategy, the wind also plays a significant role when up on the hill, dictating aiming adjustments.

"We have been in operation only for a short time," said Jeff Maldonis, director of marketing (the course opened in June). "We want the public to notice our exceptional greens and fairways first."

### FIRST-TIME HEAD SUPERINTENDENT

Other features of the course will continue to develop over time. John Roesser also discussed the current development of a new driving range box along the roadside and the planned addition of a practice chipping green and bunker. Providing the weather cooperates, the new driving range should be in operation before the golfing season ends here, usually around Halloween.

This is Roesser's first time in a head superintendent position. After college, he served an internship at Pebble Beach Golf Course, in California, and another one at National Golf Lands. He was hired for the job at The Links at Outlook directly from the construction company, Inner Golf, which shaped the course.

The southern Maine course is within easy striking range of Portland, Maine, and Portsmouth, N.H., and is just over an hour's drive from Boston.

The Links at Outlook shows promise with its unique design, and given time for enhancements, management hopes to prove the course is indeed "a public course with private club conditions." ■



Photo by Dann Coffey

Mountainside housing at Bachelor Gulch, which is a property of Vail Resorts Development Co.

The Vail model might be atypical with such expensive real estate. A development underway at Bachelor Gulch has already sold 56 of its 600 units for homes that will cost over \$5 million each. A common cost of building in the area is \$1,000 a square foot.

The numbers differ, but the three companies all agree that golf is a key factor in developing four-season resort operations,

which are an absolute must to keep ski resorts viable. And the multiple resort companies are not alone. Smaller mountains such as Ragged in New Hampshire now have golf courses, and others are building or considering golf.

In fact, golf may just be the key ingredient in the survival of the ski industry. For some exciting golf, keep your eye on the mountains. ■

## Jim Fazio Q&A

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I had a young Bahamian on the tractor who had been trained at Huntington Hartford's course (the Arawak Golf Club on Paradise Island). He was a great shaper but one day I loaned him my car and he got drunk and smashed my car so bad that it wouldn't run again. So he gave me a bicycle to make up for it. That taught me not to lend my car again – I rode that bike for two years.

**GCN:** Which countries have you worked in?

**Fazio:** In addition to the Bahamas, I've worked in Spain, Italy, Puerto Rico, Japan, Mexico, and now, Turkey. Plus all my work in the United States. My son, Tommy, is working with me on Grand Bahama now, where we're renovating the Ruby and Emerald Course at the old Princess Resort (now Bahamia). So, since 1964 to 2000, I'm back in the Bahamas again.

**GCN:** Turning to Italy where you have been so active, are these projects just for tourism and resorts?

**Fazio:** Well, in Italy in 1986/87 there were about 120 golf courses. Since then another 50 have gone in. The majority are located in the northern region near the commercial centers and bigger cities. Southern Italy is a lot different with less interest, and a drier, more mountainous land. Rome is a city tourist attraction, and people don't go there to play golf mainly. The coastal regions and the weather are not really set up for resort golf operations. Some of the other Mediterranean coasts of Turkey, Spain, and Portugal are more likely to attract resort golfers.

The project we are doing now is in

Verona, in the northern region, where the local business people and visitors from Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and France can drive in a few hours. It is called Club Paradiso, on a beautiful private estate, and will be open for anyone to play. A new hotel will be added to the older estate buildings next year.

The developer and I first got together in 1988, and that shows you how long it takes to get permits in Italy. The land use, labor regulations and environmental permits are very strict, and years can go by while all these things are resolved. We started construction in July. Nine holes will open by 2002, and the other nine will open in 2003.

**GCN:** Do you approach design from a "heroic" or "strategic" perspective?

**Fazio:** When a golfer stands on the tee I want him to know there's a place for him to play to. If he hits it to the right area, he will find the way to avoid the hazards. You get 14 chances to design the hole to achieve this – on the par 3's, of course, you are aiming at the green. You have to give the golfer a chance, the right angle to hit the shot that will give the right result. Don't let the course eat him up. Let him anticipate success if he puts it in the right part of the fairway.

**GCN:** Is this the Fazio philosophy?

**Fazio:** Yes. If I see 6,600 yards on the scorecard I know I can play to my handicap. That's what I try to give the golfer, a chance to play to his handicap. In my designs at La Querce in Italy, Hawks Nest in Florida, or The Woodlands in Maine, I have put these ideas into the course. They are a challenge, but are fun to play for all levels of players. ■