

## Hills' Sienna Plantation opens

MISSOURI CITY, Texas—The Sienna Plantation Golf Club, designed by Arthur Hills, has opened for play. The club is part of Sienna Plantation, a 10,500-acre community near Houston. The course winds through a forest and several lakes add challenges, offering risk/reward shot values.

"Spacious corridors afforded us

the opportunity to build a variety of golf holes," said Hills. "Our goal was to design an easy-to-maintain course that fit naturally onto the site, enhanced the beauty of the property and provided variety in the shots required. We wanted to be sensitive to the environment while keeping in mind the elements that give a course character."

Sienna's planners spent nearly a year identifying and delineating sensitive environmental areas and designed the course to have zero or minimal impact on the wetlands environment, said Doug Goff, general manager. Sienna worked with wetlands consultants to create areas of interest around the golf course, preserving the wetlands. On the course, the wetlands will be treated as hazards.



The 17th hole at the Arthur Hills-designed Sienna Plantation GC, near Houston

## Irish Course

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the challenge. Yardage measures 7,203 from the back tees and 5,109 from the front. Slope and ratings have not yet been established.

"My challenge in designing the Irish Course was to make it of equal stature with its neighbor, the Straits Course," said Pete Dye. "It had to be more than just a complement to the Straits—it had to be comparable." The renowned architect, whose creations have occasionally been described as "Dye-abolical," said he approached the project with particular fervor. "I've used every trick I've ever learned in designing this course," Dye said. "I should say this with some degree of modesty. In my lifetime, I've never seen anything like this. Anyplace. Period."

Steve Friendlander, general manager and director of golf for the Kohler resort, describes the Irish Course as an interesting hybrid. "It has parkland-style holes with trees and creek crossings, grassland holes that are somewhat flat and meandering, and the dunes and bunkers of a seaside links course, without the ocean."

In addition to the creeks that intersect the course, the layout also permits views of Lake Michigan from five holes. The lake is quite visible from hole 13, but that won't be the principal reason the 183-yard, par-3 will be memorable, according to Friendlander. Dubbed "blind man's bluff," hole 13 reveals only about 10 to 25 percent of its putting surface from most of the tee boxes. "It may be the most memorable hole you'll ever play in the United States," Friendlander predicted. "The green is absolutely huge, more than 20,000 square feet. But it's built down in the middle of a war zone with pot bunkers and dunes 20 to 40 feet high on three sides."

Whistling Straits is located nine miles northeast of the resort destination of Kohler, Wis. The resort's other amenities include The American Club, the Midwest's only AAA Five Diamond resort hotel; Blackwolf Run golf course, site of the 1998 U.S. Women's Open Championship; and Kohler Waters Spa, set to debut in this fall. The Straits Course will host the 2004 PGA Championship. ■

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