

Weiskopf adding course at \$5-billion Vegas resort

HENDERSON, Nev. — Tom Weiskopf has broken ground on his first design in Nevada, this one on 180 acres here at the Lake Las Vegas Resort, a \$5-billion residential and golf complex unfolding on 2,245 acres.

The resort already has two highly rated Jack Nicklaus-designed courses, SouthShore Golf Club and Reflection Bay. The

Weiskopf layout has not yet been named but is scheduled to open in summer 2002. It will offer daily-fee play.

"We're looking forward to watching this masterpiece take shape and expect the course to rank among the best of Tom's acclaimed designs recognized throughout the world," said John Herndon, director of golf at the resort.

Weiskopf said his design will feature two contrasting nines. "The front nine exists in more subtle elevation changes and winds through the natural desert landscape," he explained. "The back nine has quite dramatic changes in elevation with spectacular views to the distant mountains and downtown Las Vegas. The strongest characteristics are definitely going to be the water

holes, unique canyons and some unbelievable changes in elevation."

The par-72 track will offer multiple tees on every hole, and measure 5,400 yards from the forward pegs to 7,100 yards from the back. Wadsworth Golf Construction is building the course.

Lake Las Vegas Resort is being developed by Transcontinental Properties, a subsidiary of the operating owner, Transcontinental Corp., with entities

owned by Sid and Lee Bass of Fort Worth, Texas. Transcontinental, based in Santa Barbara, Calif., specializes in developing master-planned communities.

The proximity of two Nicklaus courses has driven the price of the community's 850 residential lots to a range of \$300,000 to \$10 million.

Nicklaus and Weiskopf were teammates on the Ohio State golf squad in the 1960s.

Preserve GC

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Throughout the design and construction, the course's impact on the land continued to be the primary concern. Four collection lakes exist on the course, and together they can hold 50 percent of the annual water usage. Modern disease-resistant and drought-resistant grasses were used on tees, greens and fairways. Only 49 bunkers exist on the course; any more than that, Tom Fazio believed, would pull a golfer's attention away from the endless vistas that frame each hole.

WINTER DRAINAGE WORK

Head superintendent Forrest Arthur came to the Preserve in 1998, just as construction was about to begin. After several years as superintendent at Spanish Bay Golf Links, he was familiar with the challenges of the coastal climates.

Arthur took extra care in the selection of grasses that would not only do well but would also be more disease-resistant in order to minimize the need for chemical applications.

Throughout the shaping phase, drainage and collection of run-off become a strong priority.

"One obstacle was that the natural soil doesn't have a strong percolation rate," Arthur said. "We decided to lay down an eight-inch sand cap across the fairways to improve winter drainage, and we supplemented this with an extensive amount of drain tile to collect the run-off. During construction we brought in 38,000 tons of sand, but the effort will pay off in the long run by allowing for a stronger root system for the turf."

This determination to create a more sustainable environment drove every stage of construction, from hole locations to cart path building. The result is a course that flows through the varied terrain while providing an exceptional golfing challenge. The absence of homes near the course adds to the feeling of total immersion in this superb environment.

Golf here is truly played in a natural preserve of a rare kind, and this project will serve as a shining example of the ways in which golf development and land conservation can co-exist without public funding. ■

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