

Fazio's Daniel Island Club plays through 'low country' marshland

By JAY FINEGAN

CHARLESTON S.C. — In the late 1970s, a young Tom Fazio, freshly emerged from the shadow of his famous uncle, George Fazio, came to the South Carolina "low country" and set about creating one of his first solo golf designs on one of Charleston's barrier islands. That course, Wild Dunes Links on the Isle of Palms, immediately catapulted Fazio into the front ranks of his profession.

Now Fazio has returned here, working his creative magic on another island setting, transforming the fields, woodlands and marshlands of Daniel Island into another masterpiece — the private-membership Daniel Island Club.

"This is a new 'old golf club,' " the architect said. "By that, I mean it's going to have the feeling that it's been here forever. In that sense, it will be very much like Charleston itself."

Open since November, the club is part of a 4,000-acre golf-oriented community, which will eventually have 1,400 houses and all the elements of a self-contained town.

Fazio was brought in seven years before any development work began and given first crack at the real estate. In fact, other development plans hinged upon his routing scheme. "Everybody says they do this, that they devote the best land to the golf course," he said. "But here, it really happened."

The result is a 7,093-yard par-72 layout cut from a low country landscape graced by live oaks and defined by twisting tidal creeks and acres of salt marshland. Fazio exposed the many different faces of the island in a tight routing that is easily walkable.

TESTING ALL SKILLS

Golfers at the Daniel Island Club will be challenged right from the start. The

opening hole is a brutish par-4 measuring 465 yards from the back markers and 324 from the shortest pegs.

Though it starts and finishes with monster par-4s, this is not strictly a long hitter's golf course. The layout will test every aspect of a player's game, including power, accuracy and finesse. From the back tees, the four par-3s total 844 yards, yet two par-4 holes are less than 360 yards.

One such hole is the fifth, a classic example of golf architecture fitting the natural landscape. A finger of marsh cuts in front of all but the forward pegs on this slight dogleg left. But it's a marsh that runs the length of the hole to the left that demands concern. Big hitters might be tempted to drive this 342-yarder, especially with a nice tailwind, but a pond just to the front left of the green waits to gobble up even the slightest pull at this gentle dogleg left. A prudent, carefully placed tee shot with something less than a driver, however, should set up a short pitch to the green.

Hole number 12 marks the start of seven straight holes on the marsh. The 13th is 448 yards of demanding territory requiring a precise drive to find the higher left side of a split-level fairway if one is to have a clear view of the green. The 14th measures only 410 from the back markers, but a huge oak tree standing sentry in the right center of the fairway makes the hole somewhat diabolical. If you safely navigate past the oak, you're looking at an elevated green wrapped from the left side to the back by marsh.

THE BRUTAL 15TH

Then comes number 15, which is downright barbaric — a 244-yard par-3, with a pond to carry if you're to even get close to the green. Even the middle-tee player



An aerial view of Tom Fazio's new Daniel Island layout

will face 212 yards of challenge with the pond still in play. And one more thing: expect the wind to be a factor here, since the hole is bordered on the left by acres of marsh. But if you bail right, a bunker to the right of the green lies in wait. There are no shortcuts here; 15 is a big hole that demands a quality shot.

The finishing hole, a 456-yard par-4, is a classic, requiring a modest marsh carry from the tee to reach a generous fairway. The real task here will be in a long approach to an elevated green set up against a marsh backdrop. A beach bunker buffers the left side of the green from a small pond and the marsh that extends down the left side of the fairway.

On another note, the Daniel Island Golf Learning Center is a gem of its own. More than 400 yards long and roughly 165 yards wide, it promises to be the most comprehensive facility in the greater

Charleston area.

Nearly 7,000 square feet of teeing space will insure golfers of top quality turf conditions, regardless of the season. And with tees at either end of the driving area, the range can easily accommodate individual players, private lessons and group clinics simultaneously. Additional putting greens, chipping greens and practice bunkers round out the practice area.

The Daniel Island Company, master developer of the property, said house prices, based on location, view, size and design, will range from the low \$200,000s to nearly \$1 million. In the first neighborhood being built, Daniel Island Park, all homes are being designed by South Carolina-registered architects, and all landscaping plans must be created by certified landscape architects.

Black Gold Golf Club near L.A. on track for spring opening

YORBA LINDA, Calif. — The City of Yorba Linda reports that its Black Gold Golf Club, a 6,900-yard, par-72 hole facility, continues to move towards a spring 2001 completion.

The club is managed by Kemper Sports Management of Northbrook, Ill., and designed by renowned golf architect Arthur Hills, who said the views afforded from the layout are outstanding.

"The par-4 12th hole sits atop the highest elevation for a teeing area in Orange County," Hills said. "You can see all the way to Catalina Island on a clear day. Golfers are really going to enjoy the challenging yet forgiving aspects of this course. Bold play will certainly be rewarded and I'm confident golfers will have a great experience."

The back nine of Black Gold Golf Club has been shaped and the irrigation system has been installed. Upon completion of these holes by Environmental Golf, this portion of the course will be turned over to Kemper Sports Management.

After the front nine has been shaped

and upon completion of the back nine, the general contractor will begin the installation of irrigation on the front nine and turn over holes to KemperSports Management as they are completed. Construction should be finished by the middle of February, with grow-in starting immediately thereafter.

MASTER-PLANNED COMMUNITY

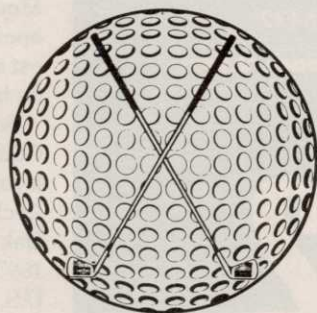
This master planned community will convert 1,110 acres of a former Shell Oil Company field into a high-end residential community, with 2,100 single-family homes, an elementary school, 10 miles of pedestrian and equestrian trails, and two five-acre parks.

"Black Gold Golf Club will be an outstanding amenity for the residents of Yorba Linda and all of Southern California," explained KemperSports CEO Steve Lesnik.

The course, situated 10 miles northwest of Disneyland, will also include a lighted driving range, a practice green and a 20,000-square-foot clubhouse complete with locker rooms, a pro shop, a full service bar and grill and banquet facilities.

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