

Rees Jones returns to South Carolina's 'low country'

By JAY FINEGAN

JOHN'S ISLAND, S.C. — Construction action is underway at the private Golf Club at Briar's Creek, a new Rees Jones design near Charleston. Set at the edge of one of South Carolina's most scenic rivers, amid a 900-acre retreat of maritime forests and unspoiled marshland, the course will enjoy a superb natural environment.

John's Island lies next to Kiawah Island, home to six golf courses.

Each of the Briar's Creek nines will cross the marsh, which serves as both a hazard and an avenue to fine views of the Kiawah River. The inland holes skirt freshwater wetlands and wind through huge stands of live oaks. Much of the property served as a cotton plantation at one time.

The project is the first golf course for developers Steve Koenig and Ed Myrick, who originally owned the land. The complex will include some 60 houses, mostly sited on large lots along a new lake. The lake, requiring the excavation of a million cubic yards of dirt, is set apart from the fairways to enhance a "pure" golfing experience. "You'll be hard-pressed to see 10 homes while you're playing," Koenig said.

A 12,000-square-foot clubhouse, intended to be "comfortable and casual," will feature a dining room, a billiards room, a complete pro shop and exercise facilities, along with locker rooms and a lounge.

OPEN BY THANKSGIVING

The 300-acre layout is scheduled to be ready for play by Thanksgiving. Wadsworth Golf's Southeast division is building the course, expected to play at about 7,100 yards.

The layout is currently being shaped and will be both sodded and sprigged once irrigation and drainage work is completed. Superintendent Kyle Bibler is fully on board and assisting in the construction.

The club is being billed as one of the most exclusive private golf clubs in the region. The 20 "founding members" ponied up \$700,000 each in exchange for a three-percent stake in the development.

Founding members include Jeffrey Immelt, the chairman-designate at General Electric, and Robert McNair, owner of the Houston Texans, a new NFL franchise.

MEMBERSHIP BY INVITATION ONLY

Membership is by invitation only. "We just sent out the first 40 invitations," said Sara Koenig, membership

coordinator. "We have our founders completely in place, and now we're working on our regular memberships. People are nominated by current members, so the invitations come from founders."

Regular memberships require \$675 in monthly dues, and \$75 more for a family membership. The total membership will



Groundbreaking at Briar's Creek: (left to right) Steve Weisser, Steve Koenig, Rees Jones and Ed Myrick

be capped at 300.

The property is rich in "low country" wildlife, everything from deer and raccoons to alligators and a variety of coastal birdlife, ranging from ospreys and egrets to herons.

The club will include a driving range; chipping, pitching and putting areas; and a state-of-the-art teaching facility.

Hills design unfolding in the Rockies' Roaring Fork Valley

GLENWOOD SPRINGS, Colo. — Site clearing recently commenced at Rose Ranch Golf Club, an Arthur Hills/Steve Forrest and Associates design located in the Roaring Fork Valley, about 45 minutes west of Aspen.

The 7,200-yard, par-72 layout, scheduled to open in the late summer of 2002, will take maximum advantage of the Rocky Mountain scenery, according to golf architect Chris Wilczynski, the project manager.

The highlight of the layout will be the finish. "The last four holes are located on a plateau on top of a mountain, about 300 feet above the other holes on the course," said Wilczynski. "These holes will be very dramatic to play and will help make Rose Ranch the best course in the Roaring Fork Valley."

A strategic course that will place a premium on accuracy and shotmaking, the layout has a number of holes on the valley floor. Numbers three and four run alongside the Roaring Fork River, which for fishing enthusiasts is a gold class

trout stream.

Mount Sopris, standing 14,000 feet, provides a stunning backdrop to holes 10 and 11.

WADSWORTH BUILDING PROJECT

Wadsworth Golf Construction will handle the construction, under their southwest office in Buckeye, Ariz.



Rose Ranch will play through this rugged Rocky Mountain landscape.

Troon Golf, of Scottsdale, Ariz., has been retained to provide project management during the construction and will stay on as the management company and course operator once Rose Ranch opens for play.

The course owner is L.B. Rose Ranch LLC, a division of Lehman Brothers, a New York-based investment banking firm. The developer is Gate Capital Properties, of San Francisco.

Troon is currently interviewing candidates for the position of superintendent.



RULEWICH'S GRAND DUNES

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. — The Grand Dunes Golf Course in Myrtle Beach, S.C. is on schedule to open for play this spring. The Roger Rulewich-designed course is the centerpiece of Grande Dunes Golf Village, a 2,200-acre real

estate development that stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the intracoastal waterway. The course measures 7,618 yards from the championship tees and offers five other sets of tees for golfers of all skill levels.

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