

Nicklaus brings affordable golf to Silicon Valley

By DOUG SAUNDERS

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Jack Nicklaus' latest daily-fee facility, the Valley Course at Coyote Creek Golf Club, opened for play here this summer, installing the final piece of a 36-hole complex developed by Castle & Cooke Golf Properties.

The new layout joins the Tournament Course, a Nicklaus signature layout that debuted in 1999, which hosts a Senior PGA Tour event — the Siebel Classic — every March.

The creation of these two courses on a 2,000-acre site — just minutes from the nerve center of the "new economy," Silicon Valley — was actually the solution to a pressing problem for Castle & Cooke: the need to upgrade an existing course on the property.

OLD RIVERSIDE COURSE

Castle & Cooke has owned this property for decades and built the original Riverside Golf Club here in the 1950s. After developing the top-flight Tournament Course here, the company decided to renovate the Riverside course. However, there were some roadblocks.

"This piece of property had been determined to be an 'urban preserve,' which limited the ability to develop home sites," explained Gordon Carter, vice president and general manager of Castle & Cooke Golf Properties. "The local planning boards were more receptive to the idea of a golf expansion. By renovating the original golf course and adding another upscale public facility, we felt we could fill a desperate need in the southern part of the Bay Area."

BRINGING NICKLAUS ABOARD

The original golf course was a blend of nines designed by Jack Fleming and William F. Bell. Castle & Cooke decided to have Nicklaus create a course first to



The third hole at Nicklaus' Valley Course at Coyote Creek Golf Club

stimulate interest and exposure and then complete the renovations of the original track.

The two courses provide a striking contrast. While the Tournament Course is wide open, with seven holes sliding into the hills, the old Riverside track occupies a relatively flat piece of ground. The old fairways are lined with now-mature Monterey pines, cypress and oak trees, providing a traditional feel.

To create the new Valley Course, Nicklaus first had to deal with a routing dilemma. The new clubhouse would serve both courses, and the developers wanted returning nines on both layouts. While this was relatively easy to accomplish with the new course, Nicklaus had to create five new holes and weave the other holes through the trees, saving as many as possible.

"We made an effort to save trees, and

only took out a few to create some new tees and develop some different fairway shapes," said Valley Course superintendent Chad Scott.

FAITHFUL TO ORIGINAL DESIGN

After scraping out the old fairways, the course was not drastically reshaped. The Valley layout, at 7,068 yards, stays true to the original contours with only subtle bunker flashes and soft fairway rolls added for perspective by Nicklaus and the course builder — Elon Golf Construction Company of Escalante, Calif.

Both courses are planted with rye with slightly different greens; the Tournament Course features G-2 bentgrass and the Valley Course sports Dominant Plus bentgrass. Scott is confident he could bring the Valley greens up to tournament caliber, and he might have to. The final routing for the next Tour event could employ 13 holes on the

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Golf expanding in Georgia's Golden Isles

BRUNSWICK, Ga. — In October, Coastal Pines Golf Course became the latest development in a collection of new courses and renovations here and throughout the Golden Isles of Georgia.

Designed by Mark Bennett of Augusta Golf Designs in Augusta, Ga., the 18-hole public facility stretches 6,803 yards.

But Coastal Pines is only one of a series of new developments in the area. The Retreat Golf Course, at the Sea Island Golf Club on St. Simons Island, opened in August. The Retreat, designed by golf pro and course architect Davis Love III, is the final leg following an extensive makeover of Sea Island's golf courses.

\$140 MILLION INVESTED

The Seaside Golf Course, designed by Tom Fazio, reopened in the fall 1999. The renovated course includes the former Marshland nine-hole layout, designed by Joe Lee in 1973, as the front nine and the Seaside nine, originally designed by Colt & Alison in 1929, as the back nine. The Plantation course, designed by Rees Jones, reopened in 1998.

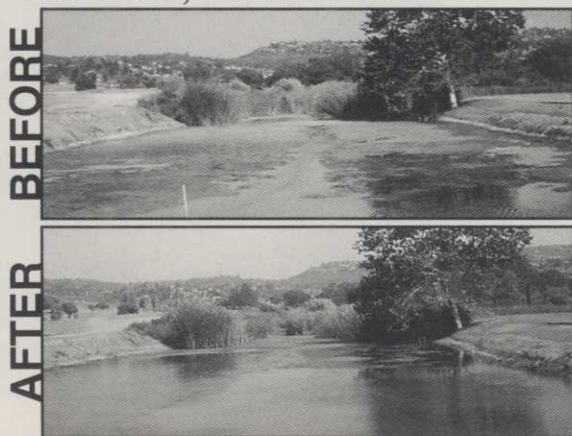
More than \$140 million has been invested by the Sea Island Company to make capital improvements and renovations aimed at improving accommodations, amenities and guest services.

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and transformed into the golf clubhouse, Jacobson said.

Construction of the new course is expected to begin in spring 2002 with an anticipated opening in fall 2003.

HOLLOW CREEK GOLF CLUB

Hollow Creek Golf Course broke ground in June and will hold a grand opening next summer. Located some 40 miles outside Washington D.C. and surrounded by the Catoctin Mountains, the 18-hole public layout offers views of greens framed by distant mountains, stone wall features from rock excavated onsite, and rolling hills bisected by Hollow Creek.

"We worked with several agencies to establish a rather detailed protection system as far as erosion and sediment control for the creek," said Jacobson. "Buffer zones, diversion swales, silt fencing, detention basins and bio-retention basins are all part of the design to protect that corridor."

Natelli Communities is developing a real estate project around the course. The community will consist of 210 single family homes and 140 townhouses, according to company owner Tony Natelli.

Klein Golf Associates will manage course operations. "We are following Rick's design to the 'T,'" said Stephen Klein, course owner. Klein said he is planning to charge a greens fee of \$35 for a "country-club-for-a-day" golf experience targeting a younger clientele that cannot afford a steady diet of high-priced golf.

There are four separate tee boxes at the par-71 layout that plays 6,610 yards from the championship tees down to about 5,080 yards from the forward positions.

STONY POINT IN NY

The Stony Point Golf Course, about 35 miles outside New York City up the Hudson River in the town of Stony Point, is due to open in 2003. "It's a spectacular site overlooking Bear Mountain State Park," said Jacobson. "It's a new 18-hole construction we're planning to finish next fall. We've got about three or four holes roughed in now."

INDIAN LAKES

In addition to new courses, Jacobson is also busy with restoration and renovation work. The two 18-hole courses at Indian Lakes Resort in Bloomingdale, Ill., just west of Chicago, will be undergoing a \$5 million renovation.

Renovation of the East and West courses that were originally designed by Robert Bruce Harris in 1965, will occur nine holes at a time over the next four years. An island green on the par-4 17th hole on the East Course – currently the 8th hole – is will be the new signature hole.

The existing 380-yard par-4 8th

plays as a dogleg right with a lake along the left side of the fairway. In the middle of the lake is an island where a new 6,500-square-foot green will be constructed. A new foot bridge, spanning 70 feet, will connect the fairway to the green. "It will create a high level of excitement for golfers," said Jacobson. "It will be a topic of conversation long after they complete their rounds." ■

Coyote Creek

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Valley Course and five from the Tournament track.

"Now that we're open to the public, I'm putting a lot of effort into maturing the greens as quickly as possible," Scott said. "We will have to make some adjustments to the grasses in the rough to blend the two courses

together for tournament play."

GOOD TIMING

The completion of the \$20-million project turned out to be well timed for Cooke & Castle. The dot-com collapse has cooled the once white-hot Silicon Valley economy, dampening other sectors of the local market, including golf. "The crash of the dot-commers has definitely had a big impact," Scott said.

With demand for private club memberships sagging, however, the need for affordable, daily-fee play has increased. The Valley Course green fees – \$55 during the week and \$70 on weekends – are very competitive in this part of California. "We're doing very well on the Valley side," said Scott, "and the addition of the Senior Tour event has built interest in both courses." ■



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