

Spencer building dream course

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go to another level. I think you have to have something that really sets you apart from the average golf course so people are interested in coming there," Spencer said. The front gate is modeled after the entrance to a farm Spencer saw in Lexington, Ky., and three-rail fences will follow the road to the clubhouse. In the Champions Grill, one wall will feature Kentucky Derby winners, while another will feature the likes of Nicklaus, Palmer and Hogan.

'COUNTRY CLUB FOR A DAY'

Spencer said his vision is to make Saddlehorn a "true country club for a day." To that end, he has designed wide fairways so average golfers can find their tee shots and big greens because, as Spencer said, "the average guy likes to hit a lot of greens and be able to find his ball and keep moving."

There won't be any tricks on this course, Spencer said.

"The bottom line is a golfer has to have fun. He may not necessarily play really well, but I don't want him losing a dozen balls or hitting a really good shot up over a blind rise only to find out there's a swamp on the other side," he said. "I want all of my hazards to be visible, I want all of my landing areas to be wide and accessible. I don't want the greens to be all tricked up."

NATURAL COURSE DESIGN

The design for Saddlehorn follows Spencer's philosophy of natural course design, he said.

"You take a piece of land and rather than just rip it apart from fencepost to fencepost, you try and find all the natural features on the site and build your golf course into the site itself so that when you're finished it looks like it's been there for 20 years," Spencer said. "It's all geared toward keeping an owner's cost down and being able to get as many golfers as possible to come back over and over again. That's what natural course design is really all about."

This philosophy is especially important because the land Saddlehorn will be built on surrounds two reservoirs for the city of Swanton. While this presented a challenge in the design, Spencer said he and his partners have come up with several ways to keep fertilizers and pesticides away from the water, both now and in the future.

"We're going to use creative

grading. All surface water will literally run away from the reservoir to a large series of basins. And we're going to create a 15-foot barrier of vegetation between the water's edge and any place that we begin to maintain," Spencer said. "We're using chemicals that have very low migration rates

and very short half-lives. We're trying to use things that we put down in frequent applications but very light applications so that they're down, they're on the ground, the plant takes them up and they're gone. Even considering the fact that we're going to contain all our surface water, I still want to be extra cautious about the chemicals we actually use." ■

LaPlaya Resort course re-opens

NAPLES, Fla. — LaPlaya Beach & Golf Resort, a Noble House Resort, has opened an 18-hole Bob Cupp-designed golf course, featuring a driving range, practice area and 15,000-square-foot clubhouse.

The course is open for resort

guests and LaPlaya private club members, and is part of a \$45 million renovation of the resort.

Cupp created a completely new course routing. During construction, contractors moved 600,000 cubic yards of dirt to create the course's contours. In addition to preserving the majority of the property's existing vegetation, more than \$1 million in landscaping was planted or moved. ■

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