

Bergstol forms Empire Golf & Hospitality

By ANDREW OVERBECK

NEW CITY, N.Y. — Eric Bergstol has taken his “country club for a day” concept one step further by teaming up with Davis Sezna, president of 1492 Hospitality Group, to create Empire Golf & Hospitality, a full-service golf and hospitality management company.

“We are strong on the design, development and service end,” said Bergstol. “But we are weaker on the food and beverage side. Linking up with Sezna combines our strengths and puts us in a different class.”

Since 1998, Bergstol’s Empire Golf has focused on the development of high-end public golf. The company built and now manages six golf courses in the N.Y. area and one in Florida. Sezna formed 1492 Hospitality Group in 1980 and currently operates five restaurants and owns Hartefeld GC in Avondale, Pa., and Mountain Branch GC in Joppa, Md.

The new company will manage Bergstol and Sezna’s respective courses and is already involved in several third party management contracts.

“It is a broad relationship,” Bergstol said. “We will do management and development, and we may get involved in acquisitions as well.”

The new firm will be active in the planning process for Empire Golf’s two new developments, Hollow Brook in Westchester

County, N.Y., and the Bayonne project in N.J.

Sezna’s influence has already made inroads into Empire Golf’s current facilities.

“At New Jersey [Basking Ridge] National we are going to renovate and remodel the whole clubhouse and that is something that we would not have done

without the right formula,” said Bergstol. “We have a 43,000 square foot clubhouse at Pine Hill [N.J.] GC and that is only there because of Sezna and his team.”

Bergstol said improved food and beverage operations will help drive repeat play.

“If you are going to be com-



Eric Bergstol, left, and Davis Sezna

petitive in this market, you have to set yourself apart,” he said. “Food and beverage and clubhouse operations are areas that few people get right. Sezna knows how to create an experience. After a great round of golf, we want our customers to spend the last part of their day being treated well in the clubhouse.”

Empire Golf & Hospitality will be based in Avondale, Pa., and will have an office in New City.

Club Car unveils financing solution

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Club Car has announced a new financial services program developed in conjunction with parent company Ingersoll-Rand and Citi Capital, a division of Citigroup. Ingersoll-Rand Financial Services (IRFS) answers the golf industry’s need for a full-service financing solution, according to Phil Tralies, president and CEO of Club Car.

Customers purchasing golf car fleets, utility vehicles or turf equipment can deal with the same Club Car representative for financing and receive expedited documentation processing.

“We want to make it easy for our customers to do business with us,” said Tralies. “IRFS does that by making the loan application and approval process a seamless part of the overall transaction.”

IRFS provides increased flexibility and convenience for golf course owners through a master lease agreement and a highly automated system for online document processing.

The best time to stop so
it's still in the ea