



Pagoda in background is part of Japanese motif that provides setting for Alma GC's miniature course.

### Lights Make Difference

## How New Par 3 Outdraws Eight Others in San Jose

By RON STREIBICH

**I**n a 20-mile radius of San Jose, Calif., eight Par-3 and pitch-and-putt courses are competing for the golf dollar of area residents. Last summer another Par-3 was introduced to the locale and it immediately began to outdraw all other links in this highly-competitive market.

The new Alma GC is attracting more players because, among its competitors, it has the only illuminated golf center, and the only layout with lighted Par-4 holes.

The advantage of a center is that a driving range, miniature, putting green and chipping area present more activities which obviously draw additional people. The higher attendance and extra fees permit a quicker payoff of investment in construction, lighting, landscaping, pro-shop and snack bar and form a basis for bigger

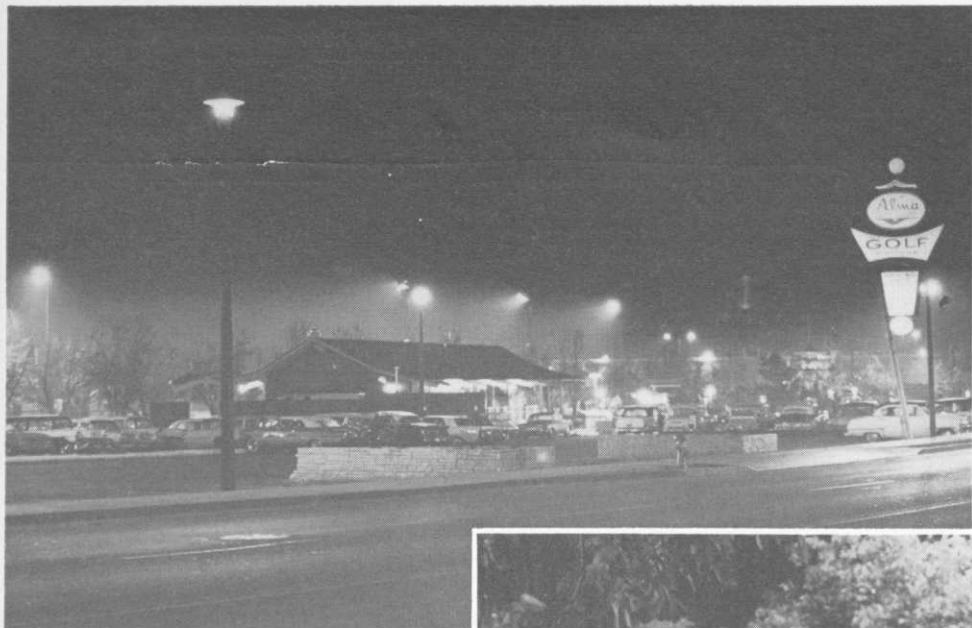
profits in coming years.

Lighting the Par-3, of course, and other areas generates great interest in play after dark. Addition of lighted Par-4 holes to the Par-3 layout moves it one step closer to the regulation game of golf, making the course attractive to the seasoned golfer as well as the youngster and beginner.

### Near-Capacity Play

The effect of these three factors on Alma is shown by the fact that of the 700 players the center draws on a Saturday or Sunday, over 60 percent of them come at night. The Par-3 alone attracts about 200 per night. The maximum it can accommodate is 216.

Further evidence of success is indicated in financial figures divulged by the corporate officers, Sam L. LoBue, president, Yoshio Katayama, vp, and D. M. Borelli. These men say that Alma represents an



Alma is a busy place when lights are turned on as above photo indicates. Interesting lighting effects (right) are made possible through wide use of trees. Owners report that their system isn't plagued by glare and players have no trouble following flight of the ball.

investment of about \$300,000. It was obtained through personal funds and various bank loans. They expect the investment to pay off in around five years.

### Putt for FREE

The aim at Alma is to attract players to the Par-3, and then count on them and also non-golfers to spend some time at the driving range or one of the other golf activities. Some of these activities — the putting green and chipping area — are free to encourage people to go on to the range or course to try their luck.

The main course is a 9-hole, 1,780-yard, Par-30 layout which is lighted until around midnight. It costs \$1.25 for nine until 6 p.m. and \$1.50 for the evening "rush hour." Several holes are thickly lined with trees and every hole has at least a few trees, sand traps and bunkers. A river bed parallels two fairways. Greens and tees are large and expertly cared for. Landscaping is especially attractive and includes two artificial lakes and a waterfall near the 9th tee.

The 60-tee driving range is cut out of an orchard, providing a scenic and protective border for the 300-yard long, 100-



yard wide area. A bucket with 60 to 70 balls costs \$1.00, while 30 to 35 balls go for 50 cents.

### Has Chipping Green

The huge putting green has 18 holes and can accommodate around 36 at one time. A 60-yard square area with a small green and flag is also available for players who can practice anything from chips to half-wedges. Both of these facilities are free.

Rounding out the golf center is an extremely interesting and attractive 18-hole miniature course. Its motif is that of a Japanese garden including pagoda, lantern and waterfall. Fees are \$1.00 for adults and 50 cents for children.

Alma uses a total of 126 General Elec-

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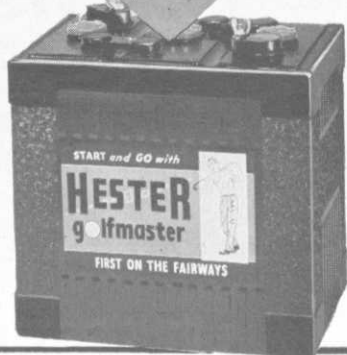
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city of Seattle on the ground that the city was performing a governmental function in providing restaurant facilities for golfers, the supreme court said in part: "Whether the city is immune from liability against this asserted claim depends upon whether its operation of the activities constituted a proprietary or governmental function.

### Operation Proprietary

"The allegations in the plaintiff's complaint are sufficiently broad to permit evidence of a state of facts which would prove that the operation was a proprietary rather than a governmental function. The plaintiff, under his pleadings, is entitled to introduce evidence on this issue and the trial court, therefore, erred in holding the operations of the activities in question was a governmental function prior to the consideration of the evidence essential to such a determination."

One justice concurred in the reversal but contended that in Washington the sovereign immunity of municipal corporations has been abrogated by statute, thus making the question of the exact nature of the function unimportant. (*Lichter v. Balow*, 370 P.2d 982.)

### Par 3 Has Big Draw

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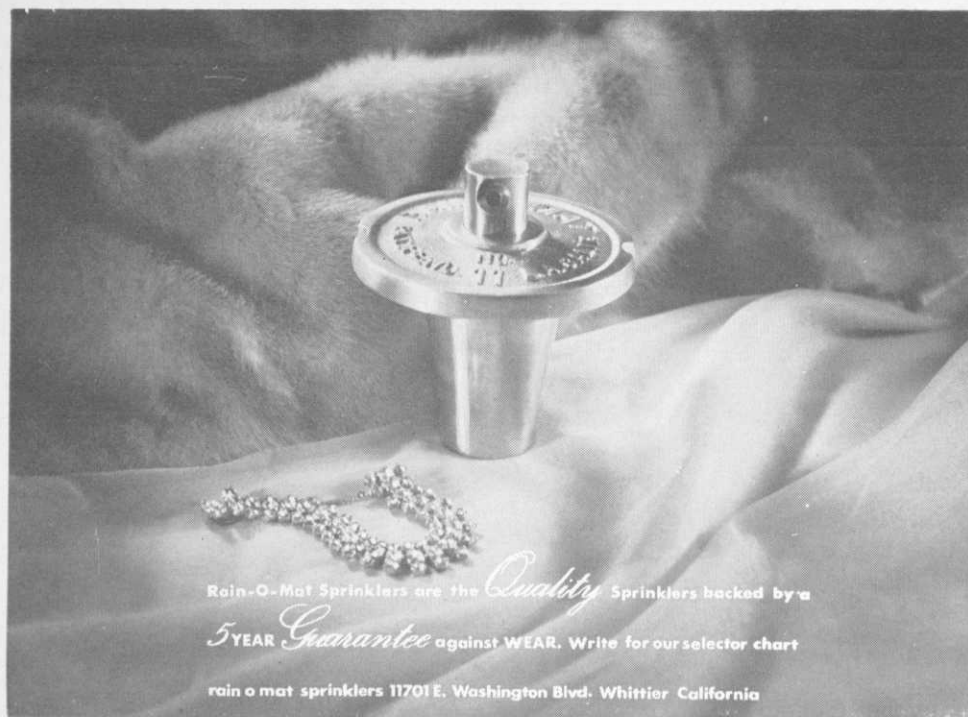
tric 1,000-watt mercury floodlights: 103 on the Par-3, 18 on the driving range, 3 on the putting green and 2 on the chipping area. On the miniature, 15 filament units are mounted on low poles. Alma officials report there is no glare, no unusual presence of bugs and balls can be clearly sighted at all times.

### Maintenance Cost Offset

Alma's initial cost for mercury luminaires was four times more than what would have been required for filament units. However, since its season is considerably longer than average, the much lower operating and maintenance cost of mercury will quickly offset the higher initial cost.

Lighting details show that the luminaires are spaced about 25 yards apart and mounted atop 40-foot poles. Poles carry from one to four luminaires aimed in different directions and to different areas to minimize expenses for poles and their installation.

Golf at night has received increasing attention as it has moved from miniature course to pitch-and-putt and, within the



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past few years, to layouts composed of legitimate Par-3 holes. The addition of Par-4 holes adds further interest because this allows even the most proficient golfer to hit woods.

### Exacting Course

At Alma there are three Par-4's measuring 300, 270, and 265 yards. The latter two are rather short, but still fall within the standards of a Par-4. However, make no mistake that Alma is an "easy" par-30. There's a 235-yard Par-3 along with a 200-yard one which require strong pokes with a wood or long iron. Several other holes are good tests.

It is being proved at Alma that the length of a golf hole is no barrier whatsoever to illuminating it for night play. The simple requirement is the need for a few more luminaires — an expense more than compensated for by increased play.

### Will Light Standard Courses

In the not-too-distant future many regulation courses will be lighted and probably equipped with additional facilities. When the trend to this new idea takes hold, chances are it can be attributed in a large measure to the pioneering efforts and success of the Alma and several other lighted par-30 golf centers.

## Pro Is Potent Force

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comes into a pro shop and quickly walks out with irons or woods and doesn't have the pro or a competent assistant give the purchaser the bonus of expert, friendly attention, the customer might as well have gone to a store and bought them.

### Women Need Attention

"Women buyers ought to get a great deal of pro attention now. Women are price buyers. Most don't know golf club values yet. They see the store advertised sets of two woods and five irons being sold at prices they can afford. They don't need the 16-club sets that tournament pros are crying for. Chances are in the private or public course pro shop the potential woman club buyer visits, she won't see even a semblance of a display that demonstrates that the pro is very much interested in selling women's clubs.

"Unless there is quick progress in pro merchandising to women they may become the big buyers of the cheap Japanese clubs and balls when this merchandise floods in.

"The pro himself is the best advertising for his merchandise. What he says about it means more to his members than what