

## **Jacobsen Hardy plan 2008 ground-breaking on Mendocino 18**

MENDOCINO, Calif. — After nine years on the job, Jacobsen Hardy Golf Course Design will finally see implementation of its design of Mendocino's first 18-hole course. Developed by the Mendocino Coast Recreation and Park District, the stand-alone course — tentatively called The Cypress Links at Mendocino — will begin construction in spring 2008.

The Mendocino Coast Recreation and Park District (MCRPD) first broached the idea of golf on this property back in 1992. Fourteen years, three Environmental Impact Reports and dozens of routings later, the project has received all the necessary permitting and is scheduled to open for play in early summer 2010 — on a striking-but-sensitive parcel featuring sandy soils, long views of the Pacific Ocean, and stands of cypress, northern bishop pine, redwood and hemlock.

“Each design we undertake is driven by its environment. It's the factor that affects the style of course we design, the time it takes to gain permitting, the construction schedule — everything,” said Peter Jacobsen, the PGA Tour veteran who partners with Jim Hardy in Houston-based Jacobsen Hardy Golf Course Design. “The Mendocino project has taken a very long time, but the golf course we plan to produce there will be worth all the time and effort.

“When you work with the environment, that's just the way it is. The heavy, wet winters here will require two construction seasons, for example: Construction bids go out this winter, so we won't begin building the course until May; seeding must be completed by August, so we'll have to wait until 2009 to complete finish work and grass the course.

“But in terms of course style,” Jacobsen continued, “the landscape here will yield a breathtaking collection of golf holes. It's difficult to ignore the similarities here to golf on the Monterey Peninsula, Spyglass Hill in particular. Our opening hole — a downhill par-4 — is so reminiscent of the 1<sup>st</sup> at Spyglass, it's scary. The peakaboo views of the Pacific, the Cypress trees, the vegetation. It's all there — but this course is a whole lot closer to Highway 101!”

While Jacobsen Hardy has spent an inordinate amount of time on the site — owing to the famously stringent environmental regulations in California,

coupled with the site's complicated mix of protected species, including the pygmy cypress — Jim Hurst has been involved even longer, from the very beginning.

“By conservative estimate, I'd say I have about 7,000 volunteer hours into this golf course,” said Hurst, whose volunteer days are finally over; with 14 years of permitting at an end, he's now regional park and golf course project coordinator. “But I have to say that Jacobsen Hardy has been the most generous, efficient, consistent enterprise I've ever worked with — and I'm 65 years old and have been working in business and government since I was 22. We signed a contract with them in 1998, gave them a small signing deposit and they have carried all their expenses since then. That's pretty remarkable in this day and age. Most companies would have cut and run.

“Another example of their commitment has been the entire redesign process. The original routing took five designs and multiple site visits. The current design took three complete reroutings before Jim [Hardy] was satisfied. When we did sight-line clearing for all 18 holes last winter, to see whether there were wetland problems, they decided to make changes on 11 holes! But they did that quickly and efficiently — and they made it all work within the guidelines of our Timber Harvest Permit. My hat's off to them. They've just continually worked with us to redefine the golf course.”

The result is a routing that incorporates the parcel's many sensitive wetland areas and stands of Cypress while never disturbing them. A good example of that is the 4<sup>th</sup> hole, a par-3 that plays over and around a delineated wetland area.

“There's a huge redwood snag [a dead, standing tree] in the wetland on no. 4 that's become home to all sorts of wildlife,” explained Rex VanHoose, JH senior vice president/managing architect. “Against the blue sky with the green spread out beyond it, it's quite a sight. So much character. We couldn't create something this nice; we'd be fools to get rid of it.

“We'll hand-clear the sight lines there, so golfers can see where they're going. But we'll leave the stumps and soil well alone. The tee boxes have been carefully sited so the tips play directly over the wetlands, while the forward tees merely skirt it.”

The 7th hole, a driveable par-4, is another highlight. Jacobsen Hardy is noted for including at least one of these risk-reward par-4s in each of its designs, and Mendocino's 7<sup>th</sup> will deliver drama on course and off.

“It measures between 340 and 350 from the tips, and it sits just beautifully into a left-to-right, slightly downward slope from tee to green,” VanHoose reported. “The hole has been there for hundreds of years, in terms of terrain. Our job was to fit it in there and not screw it up.

“The other cool thing about no. 7 is that the entry drive will pass right by it, up the hill. Whenever possible, we try to place a compelling golf hole along the entrance road because it really enhances a player's arrival experience at the course. Looking through the cypress trees — it's pretty spectacular.”

Fans of golf literature may recognize Mendocino as the town featured in J. Michael Veron's 2003 book, “The Greatest Golf Course That Never Was”, which spins the tale of an aged Moonlight McIntyre who caddied at Augusta National Golf Club and was a friend of Bobby Jones. Moonlight possesses the secret of a mysterious Mendocino golf course, as amazing as Augusta National, that no one knows about except Jones, Augusta co-founder, Clifford Roberts, and the privileged few whom they deemed worthy to play it.

“That was fiction, of course,” said Jacobsen. “The Cypress Links at Mendocino is the real thing. But even so, we aim to make Mr. Jones proud.”

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[For more information on Jacobsen Hardy Golf Course Design, call 281-807-4176, or visit [www.jacobsenhardy.com](http://www.jacobsenhardy.com)]