

## Big Dirt at Hammock Bay

NAPLES, Fla. - In designing its new private club project, Hammock Bay, Jacobsen Hardy Golf Course Design has incorporated what the firm affectionately calls The Big Dirt.

"On a flat, sparsely treed site like this one, where we have the opportunity to design an essentially core golf course, we prefer to roll the entire site - as opposed to using our dirt allowance to build repetitive mounding and saying, 'Lookee here, we have a links,'" explains Jim Hardy, Peter Jacobsen's partner in Houston-based Jacobsen Hardy Golf Course Design. "The land we inherited at Hammock Bay is a beautiful stretch of West Florida coastline, but it's pretty flat. When we tackle a site like this one we'll use our dirt budget to build five or six hills of varying size, up to 30 feet high and 200 feet long. We'll tee off from these promontories, play in and out of them, and complement them across the site with gently rolling characteristics. We feel all of this is eminently preferable to a flat site with a bunch of pimples."

Hammock Bay Golf & Country Club is a WCI project, the 26th for Florida's leading developer of golf communities, including nearby Tuscan Reserve in Naples, and Old Palm and Parkland now under construction across the state in Palm Beach Gardens. When Hammock Bay opens for play in early 2004, few will recognise the golf course and community which occupied this site for 60 years.

Nothing of the former Marco Shore Country Club will survive this complete remake. The clubhouse was torn down and moved one-third of a mile away, leaving Jacobsen Hardy - whose design at Redstone GC is the new home of the PGA Tour's Shell Houston Open - a blank canvas on which to work.

"Anytime we have the opportunity to build a core golf course, we do it," says PGA Tour pro Jacobsen, who maintains a home near Hammock Bay in Naples. "This isn't a pure core design, but we do have 14 holes unimpeded by housing; by moving the clubhouse, we eliminated most all of the internal obstacles. It has allowed us to start from scratch.

"This part of Florida has only had a few opportunities to do core golf with a Big Dirt concept. It's going to be a stand-out project on the West Coast."

The Big Dirt is especially evident at the turn, where Hammock Bay's man-made terrain influences both the routing's aesthetics and strategy. The 10th, a 393-yard par-4, features a

green setting with water all along the right side; yet the massive hill left of the putting surface will help kick the ball onto the putting surface should one choose to play it safe. At the 175-yard par-3 11th, the same hill (at left) and a yawning waste area (at right) work together to frame one of Hammock Bay's most dramatic holes.

Of course, Hammock Bay doesn't derive all its character from elevation. The 409-yard 14th is a classic Cape-style par-4 that sweeps left to right around a lake. The risk taker can bite off as much fairway as he dares, creating a short iron approach into the green guarded by a large beach-style bunker on the right.

With little to no housing intruding on Jacobsen Hardy's new layout, Hammock Bay is typical of the nationwide trend toward development of private, residential clubs with core golf courses. But that's where the convention ends. Private golf communities are seldom redeveloped - even less so on this sort of scale. "Typically, a development like this goes private and the members renovate," notes Mike Curtin, senior vice president of marketing/sales at Naples-



based WCI. "But the location at Hammock Bay made it work. It's Naples, right on the way to Marco Island. This part of the county has needed a superior golf course for some time." In addition to commissioning Jacobsen Hardy to build an entirely new layout, WCI has planned five luxury residential towers, which will afford homebuyers long views of the course and the Gulf of Mexico - without impacting the golf course experience.

"Hammock Bay is more evidence of exactly why



clustered housing has replaced loaded fairways as the residential development model of choice," explains Hardy, who also played the PGA Tour, during the 1970s, before learning the design trade via a project management career working alongside the likes of Jack Nicklaus, Arthur Hills and Tom Fazio. "We're excited to be working with an organisation like WCI which knows the private club market so very well. They recognise, as we do, that clustered housing is a win-win for golfers and

homebuyers, and towers are certainly the ultimate in clustered housing.

"It's not often a developer can come in and buy an existing golf course community that hasn't been fully developed out. But WCI saw the opportunity. All the permits were already in place, which is rare. They saw the chance to come in and make it a completely new project - one that is more compatible with the land plan." Jacobsen Hardy Golf Course Design is one of the nation's most active course architecture firms, with projects underway on both coasts and several places in between.

Jacobsen Hardy recently signed on with East West Partners to design 18 private holes at Gray's Crossing, an ambitious 36-hole club/resort hybrid in Truckee, Calif. Nicklaus Design will handle the resort layout (ground to break next year) while Jacobsen Hardy will design the private club at Gray's Crossing, with construction starting in 2004.

In addition to Redstone, the firm will soon unveil Moorpark (Calif.) Country Club, an 18-hole semi-private facility designed for Toll Brothers just north of Los Angeles; a soft opening was held in September with a grand opening slated for spring 2003.

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