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Golf complex a vital piece in EuroDisney development

By Ed Schmidt

PARIS - In the early 1970s, the Disney Company introduced three golf courses at Walt Disney World in Orlando. The courses have achieved universal acceptance for their design features and playability, and recently Disney introduced two new layouts designed by Pete Dye and Tom Fazio, respectively, to its successful Orlando golf complex.

Now, Disney hopes to emulate their stateside golf success in Europe with the introduction of a 27-hole complex at EuroDisneyland, the sprawling theme park that opened last April in former sugar beet fields about 20 miles east of Paris, in Marne la Vallee.

Eighteen holes are slated to open for EuroDisney hotel guests in October, with public play scheduled for early 1993. The entire 27-hole layout is expected to be completed by spring 1993.

Golf EuroDisney was designed by Golfplan, and international golf course architectural firm headed by Ronald Fream, with offices in Brussels, Belgium; Bangkok, Thailand; and Santa Rosa, California. The firm has worked in more than 50 countries and has designed over 100 courses since its inception in 1972. Major Golfplan projects include the Royal Brunei

Polo Club and Bali Handara Country Club Resort in Indonesia, and Golf du Cap d'Agde and Golf de Montpellier-Massane -- the winter training home of the European PGA -- in France.

Building a world class golf course on former "flat as a pancake" farmland was no easy task, says Fream. "Quite honestly, the site had little character, poor drainage and clay soil," explains Fream. "We moved more than a million yards of dirt and carefully sculpted and contoured the site into a visually dynamic golf course. Every hole was individually shaped for its own feel and character."

Fream also planted more than 2,000 trees along the newly created rolling fairways and utilized a combination of 78 bunkers, lakes, waterfalls and rock-work to give the course a park-like ambiance.

Unlike most European courses, which don't invest heavily in drainage, Disney put heavy emphasis on developing a drainage system that would allow as much all-weather play as possible. More than 25 miles of drain pipe was put underground and 10 inches of sand was placed on fairways to keep them drier.

"There is no other course in Europe that even comes



Hole 9 ▲

Goofy takes time out to ponder his shot. ►



Above photo courtesy of Disney Corp.

close to the character of this course," says Fream. "However, we're not necessarily an American-style course. This layout is very specific, built to Disney's needs and quality criteria. Disney wanted a visually dramatic course with potential to stage major European competitions, yet also playable for the wide range of international tourists who will make up most of the golfers."

Situated three miles southeast of the theme park, the golf complex includes electric golf cart operation for all players (carts are considered a luxury in Europe), a

40-position driving range, golf bag storage and a large putting green shaped like the face of Mickey Mouse.

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