

SANTA MARIA GOLF

CRECERÁ OTROS 18 HOYOS

En 1992 abrió sus primeros nueve hoyos, tres años después estrenó los segundos y, si las previsiones no se tuercen, a finales del año que viene Santa María Golf abrirá al juego su segundo campo de 18 hoyos. Este club, enclavado en la privilegiada zona marbellí de Elviria, quiera dar así una cumplida respuesta a su demanda de juego. El año pasado, este campo registró 60.000 salidas.

El diseño del nuevo recorrido de 18 hoyos ha sido encargado al británico Dave Thomas, autor de varios de los más prestigiosos campos de la Costa del Sol y de muchos en el extranjero, destacando The Belfry, sede de varias Ryder Cups, competición que él mismo jugó en su juventud.

El nuevo campo, cuya construcción comenzará "próximamente" este mismo año, será un par 72 de mayor longitud que el actual, explica Ali Saudí, director general de Santa María Golf. "Así ofreceremos dos productos distintos: un campo algo más corto no exento de dificultades, y otro campo estilo championship, más largo, más abierto, y con las características propias de Dave Thomas". La orografía montañosa del terreno aconsejará la utilización de buggy.

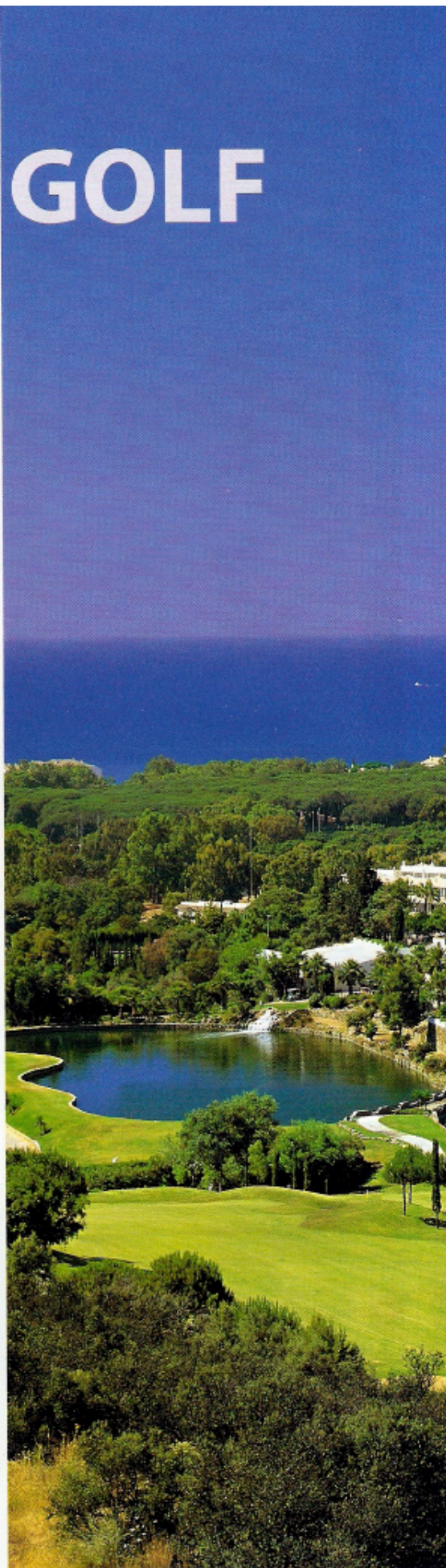
El futuro trazado estará enclavado al norte de la autopista y justo a continuación del actual. Su construcción llevará aparejada la edificación de una nueva casa club, al norte del campo. El recorrido actual cambiará la numeración de sus hoyos y empezará por su zona norte.

Respecto a la fecha de finalización del campo, Saudí asegura que "con suerte, lo abriremos a finales del año que viene". El acceso al nuevo campo será similar al actual, esto es, pagando el green fee o bien mediante un abono anual.

Saudí cree que las buenas cifras de ocupación de este campo en una coyuntura no del todo favorable para algunos segmentos turísticos en la Costa del Sol



Ali Saudí, director general de Santa María Golf.





On the go with 18 more holes

In 1992, it opened its first nine holes, three years later it inaugurated the second nine and, if all goes to plan, at the end of next year Santa María Golf will open its second 18-hole course. Located in the privileged Elviria area east of Marbella, Santa María Golf will therefore be able to respond to increased demand at the course, which last year registered 60,000 rounds.

The new course has been designed by Dave Thomas, responsible for several prestigious courses on the Costa del Sol and outside Spain, highlighted by The Belfry – venue for various editions of the Ryder Cup, which he competed in as a young touring pro.

Construction is due to start "soon" on the new course, a par-72 longer than the current layout, according to Ali Saudi, managing director of Santa María Golf. "So we will be able to offer two different products: one shorter course, not altogether free of difficulty, and another championship-style course, longer, more open and with Dave Thomas's trademark touches. The mountainous terrain means buggies are recommended.

The future layout will be situated to the north of the tollway, continuing on from the current course. Its construction will be undertaken in conjunction with a new clubhouse, to the north of the course. Hole numbering on the current course will be changed, to begin in the northern part.

As far as a completion date is concerned, Saudi says "with luck, we'll open it towards the end of next year". Access to the new course will be similar to the current one: i.e. green fee or annual season ticket.

Saudi believes the solid number of rounds played at the course, in a market that is not entirely auspicious for certain tourism sectors at the moment, is due to "the good relationship between quality and price that we offer here, which enables us to attract more clients than other courses".

Residents in the area who play at the club – which doesn't have any members but which offers season tickets – comprise about 30 per cent of the total, while the remainder are visitors or golfers who live in Marbella or its surrounding areas.

"Santa María is a short course but not an easy one. A golf course is a living being, which changes each year, with improvements introduced - on the green, in a bunker, on the fairway – so there is always an incentive, a level of difficulty in inverted



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Casa Club de Santa María Golf.

se debe sobre todo a "la buena relación calidad/precio que ofrecemos aquí y que nos permite una mejor captación de clientes que otros campos".

Los residentes en la zona que juegan en el club, que no tiene socios aunque sí abonados anuales, suponen alrededor del 30 por ciento del total, y el resto son visitantes o golfistas que no residen en Marbella o alrededores.

"Santa María es un campo corto pero no fácil. Un campo de golf es un ser vivo, que cambia cada año, en el que se introducen mejoras, en un green, un búnker, una calle, y, por lo tanto hay siempre un aliciente, una dificultad entre comillas, que lo hace siempre atractivo para el jugador, aunque éste sea asiduo", asegura el director general del club.

El mantenimiento del campo es impecable, prosigue Saudi: "Tenemos la suerte de contar con un equipo que está con nosotros desde el principio, y eso es muy importante para conseguir un estado perfecto como el que tiene este campo".

El trazado de Santa María Golf serpentea por un valle para ascender por la montaña. La orografía del terreno determinó que la mitad de los hoyos fuesen más cortos pero más complicados para el juego y que los otros nueve fueran más largos y relajados. Los greens, grandes en su mayoría, benefician al jugador en los hoyos más largos y le complican la vida en los otros por sus desniveles.

URBANISMO PREMIADO

Santa María Golf no es ajeno al desarrollo inmobiliario, si bien las construcciones existentes se caracterizan por un cuidado estilo arquitectónico. Destaca por su calidad entre los conjuntos residenciales del complejo Santa María Village. Se trata de un conjunto de apartamentos promovido por Sifasa Group y diseñados por el reconocido arquitecto Eduardo Oria (autor por ejemplo del Puerto Marina Benalmádena) y que han sido premiados en 2004 con los prestigiosos galardones de Bentley and International Homes "Mejor Desarrollo Español" y "Mejor Desarrollo en Campos de Golf".

"Este conjunto supone prestigiar aún más Santa María Golf", dice Saudi. Santa María Village consta de apartamentos de dos y tres dormi-

comas, which continues to make it attractive to players, even though they might be regulars."

Course maintenance is impeccable, adds Saudi. "We are lucky to have a team that has been with us from the start, and that's very important if you want to achieve the perfect condition this course is in."

Santa María Golf snakes through a valley before rising into the mountains. The terrain means that half the holes are shorter but more complicated for play, and the other nine are longer and relaxed. Mostly large, the greens benefit play on the longer holes and complicate a player's life on the others, because of uneven levels.

AWARD-WINNING URBANISATION

Santa María Golf is not far from real estate, though existing construction is marked by a carefully planned architectural style. Quality is one of the main characteristics of homes in Santa María Village, a complex of apartments developed by Sifasa Group and designed by renowned architect Eduardo Oria (his other work includes Puerto Marina Benalmádena). It has received Bentley and International Homes' prestigious awards for "best development in Spain" and "best development on a golf course".

"The complex provides Santa María Golf with even more prestige," says Saudi.

Santa María Village comprises two and three-bedroom apartments, with impressive top-floor apartments of 200 square metres plus 200 metres of terrace space. Prices range from 350,000 euros, and all homes have sea views.

"Great importance has been placed on the communal areas, which feature eight pools for only 200 apartments, something I believe has no comparison on the Costa," he says.

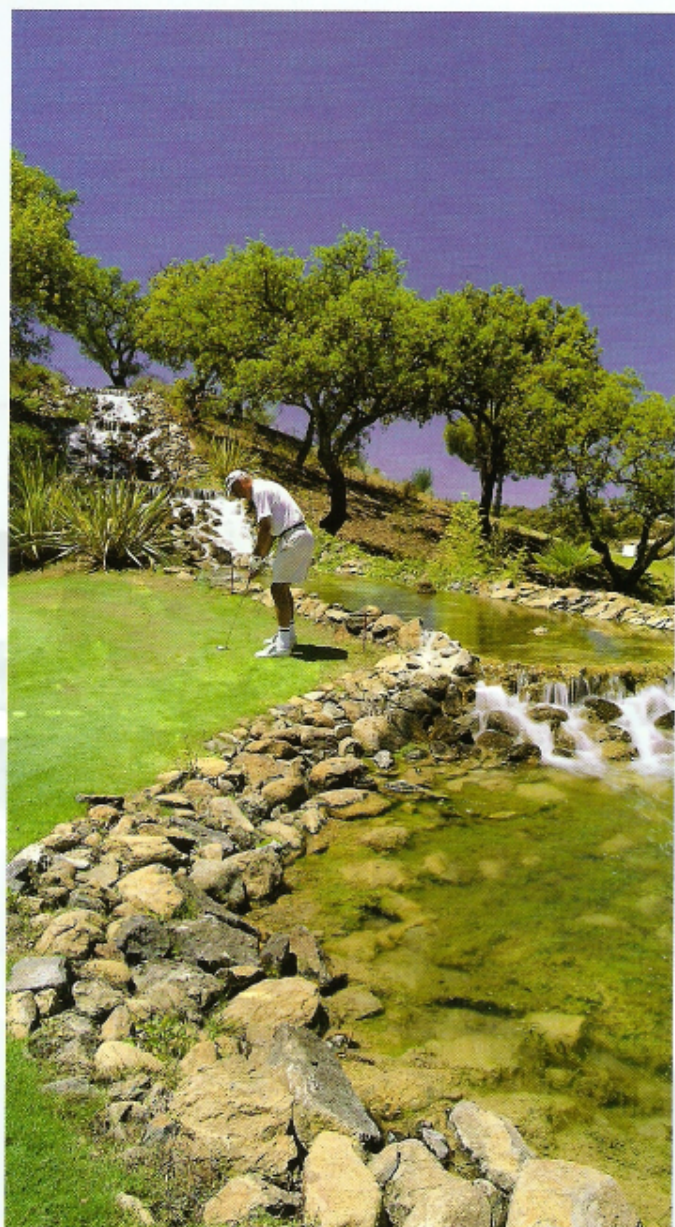
Other novelties include a revamp of the clubhouse bar-restaurant, coinciding with a re-launch of its gastronomic treats. It is the ideal place for both lunch and dinner. ■



Alí Saudi

torios y de impresionantes áticos de 200 metros cuadrados construidos más otros 200 de terraza. Los precios parten de 350.000 euros y todos disfrutan de vistas al mar. "Es de destacar la importancia y el cuidado que se ha dado a sus zonas comunes, ya que tienen ocho piscinas para sólo 200 apartamentos, algo que creo que no tiene parangón en la Costa".

Entre las novedades realizadas en las instalaciones, destaca la renovación del bar/restaurante del club, que se ha hecho coincidir con un relanzamiento de su oferta gastronómica, siendo un lugar muy apropiado tanto para almuerzos como para cenas. ■



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