

BY
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JACK NICKLAUS' LEGACY AT FOREST CITY

THE FIRST OF THREE 18-HOLE COURSES AT MALAYSIA'S NEWEST GOLF RESORT IS A WONDERMENT TO BEHOLD

The first of three 18-hole courses at Malaysia's newest golf resort is a wonderment to behold.

It is only here that one can find Middle Eastern desert meeting equatorial tropical marshland, meeting Chinese grandiose. And it is just a skip and hop away from the Second Link causeway located at Tuas.

That it is so near the island republic makes for a viable option for golfers who have earlier in June, lost one of their stalwarts of golf in the former 36-hole Raffles Country Club.

Its arrival has also rejuvenated a golfing region that now includes the multiple award-winning Horizon Hills Golf Club, the 45 holes of seaside golf at The Els Club Desaru Coast and a newly renovated Plantation Course at Tanjong Puteri Golf Resort.

Together, the region now has 27 golf courses.

Built by the legendary 18-time Major winner, Jack Nicklaus, and his son Jack Nicklaus II, this is the first Legacy Course from the world-renowned architects in the country.

The official launch early September saw Arthur Yeo, general manager of Forest City Golf Resort, Paul Springer, executive vice-president at Nicklaus Design and Dominic Wall, director of the



R&A's Asia Pacific operations, come together to unveil and hit the first drives of the first tee.

Now, almost two months into its opening, David Wang (above), the resort's club manager and golf course operations manager, has witnessed its phenomenal growth.

"In the time since our opening, the course has been fully booked through November," he said.

"We have already entertained several corporate golf events and individual groups coming in from Kuala Lumpur and the rest of Malaysia, and especially from

Singapore," he continued.

Built to the tune of RM1.8 billion, Forest City Golf Resort offers a luxury Golf Hotel that is manned by over 150 local staff representing 90 per cent of the employee population, with others arriving from China to supplement interest in the growing Chinese market.

The entire Forest City project to date, has created 1,200 job opportunities for locals which amount to an 80 per cent localisation rate of the total workforce through its master developer, Country Garden Pacificview.

General Manager Yeo said of the new course, "It's a 'desert-style' concept, surrounded by mangroves and natural water features, making this a one-of-a-kind golf course for novice and professional players."

The veteran, formerly from Spring City Golf and Lake Resort, also said there will be residential homes, retail shops and travel offerings surrounding the new resort for a holistic leisure experience for young and old.

A Fringe Villa, as it is so called, that surrounds the sprawling course, will cost as much as RM1.42 million with sizes ranging from 2,034 to 6,975 square feet of freeholding land.

A long course with four sets of tee boxes, Nicklaus has designed it with the resort golfer and the good player in mind. His penchant for bunkers interspersing with wide, undulating

fairways and tight green sites make this a fair yet demanding challenge for all levels of golf.

The opening hole is a prime example of this set-up. A relatively straight Par 4, its wide fairways lull golfers into believing it as an easy start to the round. But on the tee box, they are faced with a daunting tee shot with bunkers on either side of a fast narrowing fairway.

From there, the approach can be as much as 200 yards to a small green with only a bunker to the right as protection. A three-shot hole for most, par is a score that is hard to achieve and bogey is considered fair.

Country Garden Malaysia Director of Strategy, Ng Zhu Hann, is confident that this latest addition will further boost Johor as a preferred leisure destination in the region.

"Forest City Golf Resort and the Jack Nicklaus designed Forest City Legacy Course will attract golfing enthusiasts from all over the world and elevate the state of Johor's golfing tourism reputation in the region as this is a world class championship course. This will in turn draw major investments, promote the state tourism, opportunities and skill transfers to the locals," he said.

Forest City now offers a promotional rate of RM220 with shared caddie for weekday play and RM430 for weekend until the end of the year.

