



Will the Nicklaus-Doak collaboration match the hype – and the price tag?

For all the recent golf course development throughout the American West, 2006 brings a renewed focus to the classic East Coast. The three most intriguing and anticipated projects of the new season are in the immediate New York area – on opposite ends of Long Island.

The most closely watched is Sebonack Golf Club, on the island's far eastern shore. To start with, the location is unparalleled – in the storied town of Southampton, N.Y., right next door to National Golf Links of America and Shinnecock Hills Golf Club. It helps having waterfront holes along Great Peconic Bay, but it helps even more having the combined design talents of two rather different architects, Jack Nicklaus and Tom Doak. Owner/developer Michael Pascucci somehow convinced the two to join forces, then committed approximately \$120 million toward the site, design and permitting, course construction, clubhouse and guest cottages. How does Pascucci plan to make it work? He shows an empty wallet and says, "That's how."

As a condition of getting municipal approvals, Sebonack will be maintained on ecologically sensitive principles, with extremely low rates of fertilization as well as near total recapture of surface runoff. Even the greens have subsurface diapers to prevent seepage. As for the golf course, it actually looks like a collaboration, with the bunkers scruffier and more links-like than anything Nicklaus has done, and the greens tamer and smaller than anything Doak has done. Lines of play are well-defined, with options abounding, yet the course is firm and fast enough that it will accommodate thoughtful ground-game shotmaking. The official opening won't be until June, but that hasn't



Sebonack Golf Club: Tom's bunkers, Jack's greens.

stopped membership inquiries, nor has a joining fee that starts at \$500,000 and founding memberships that exceed \$1 million.

The two other Met-area projects that will debut in 2006 are on the other end of Long Island. Liberty National Golf Club and Bayonne Golf Club actually sit on the New Jersey shore along New York Bay and afford intimate views of lower Manhattan and the harbor front. Both occupy reclaimed waterfront industrial sites.

Liberty National, designed by Bob Cupp and Tom Kite, is visually dramatic, thanks to a routing that makes good use of the skyline and the Statue of Liberty. Bayonne, designed and built by Eric Bergstol, looks more like a manufactured Irish dunescape. Both will rely heavily upon corporate memberships.

– Bradley S. Klein