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Nicklaus to design Vancouver Island course:; [Final Edition]

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Part of a \$650-million development, this will be golfer's third course in B.C.

Jack Nicklaus will design his third signature golf course in B.C. as part of a \$650-million luxury resort development being planned on a 150-hectare site north of Ucluelet on the west coast of Vancouver Island, Marine Drive Properties Ltd. announced Thursday.

The B.C. development company said Nicklaus will be the sole designer of the 18-hole championship course and the legendary golfer will personally inspect the property near Pacific Rim National Park later this month. The yet-to-be-named course is expected to open in 2008.

"We chose Nicklaus because this is a rare opportunity to build a golf course on West Coast oceanfront," Marine Drive Properties marketing director Stephen Duke said in an interview. "We felt we needed to bring the best things to the table and one of them is the Nicklaus organization, in terms of the brand and the quality of golf courses they develop."

He said Nicklaus has been well briefed on the project as one of his senior course designers has already visited the Ucluelet property several times.

Nicklaus said in a statement he's excited about the prospect of creating "something truly special" on the "spectacular" oceanfront setting.

"If you had to compare or describe this site, you might say it has the feel of a Cypress Point (in California)," he said. "With the current routing, we have the opportunity to get as many as two holes on the Pacific Ocean and as many as four on the Ucluelet Inlet."

Nicklaus designed his first signature course in B.C. at Nicklaus North in Whistler, which opened in 1996, followed a year later by another signature course at James Island in Victoria. His company also developed Okanagan Golf Club in Kelowna -- which was designed by his son-in-law, Bill O'Leary, and opened in 1999 -- and Bear Mountain near Victoria, which Nicklaus co-designed with his son, Steve, and opened in 2003.

Nicklaus, with a record 18 major professional championships to his credit, has designed or co-designed about 250 golf courses over the past four decades and his

Nicklaus Design group is represented in 28 countries and 37 U.S. states. He can command \$2 million US or more to design a new course.

"We believe it's worth it and we'll be very proud to have his course here as a showpiece for the resort," Duke said.

The golf course will open as part of the first phase of the resort project, which is expected to contain about 1,000 housing units when it is completed in five to seven years. The first phase will also contain 30 single-family homes on half-acre and 3/4-acre lots, which are priced from \$1.3 million to \$2.2 million (land only).

Owners will have access to a private putting green, a park and a helicopter landing pad. Duke said the project will also include a condominium hotel to be built on an eight-hectare waterfront site and other resort residences.

He said the majority of buyers will likely come from western Canada, the U.S., the U.K. and Germany. Marine Drive Properties is a private company headed by German-born developer Elke Loof-Koehler.

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[Illustration]

Map: A DEVELOPMENT FOR THE GOLFER WITH WEALTH: Jack Nicklaus expects the 18-hole championship course to have two holes on the Pacific Ocean and four on the Ucluelet Inlet.