

## Benchmark Reopens Historic Donald Ross Course, French Lick Resort Casino, IN

2006-09-28

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### First of Three Championship Courses at Resort Destination to Open

Benchmark Hospitality International has completed the comprehensive restoration of the historic Donald Ross Course at French Lick Resort Casino of French Lick, Indiana. The restoration of the Donald Ross Course is part of the \$382 million French Lick Resort Casino restoration and development project. The course is the first resort feature to officially open to the public.

"With this opening we celebrate the first of many amenities that will distinguish us as the Midwest's premier resort, casino and golf destination," said Scott Spurlock, Benchmark's general manager at French Lick.

Benchmark is also developing the Pete Dye Course at French Lick, slated to open in spring 2008, and the 9-hole Tom Bendelow Course, also at French Lick, which will open in the spring of 2007, creating an unparalleled golfing destination with 45 holes.

Originally opened in 1917 by prolific golf course architect Donald Ross and made famous in 1924 for hosting Walter Hagen's winning performance at the PGA Championship, the Donald Ross Course at French Lick has been fully restored to its namesake's original vision and updated for the modern golfer. The golf course architect for the \$4.6 million restoration project was Lee Schmidt, principal with Schmidt-Curley Designs of Scottsdale, Arizona.

Marked by square, undulating greens and deep unforgiving bunkers, French Lick's Donald Ross Course once again threatens even the lowest handicaps. With a new computerized irrigation system, redesigned cart paths and a clubhouse that's a throwback to the Hagen era (its restaurant is named "Hagen's" in honor of Walter Hagen's win in the 1924 PGA at French Lick), the Donald Ross Course at French Lick Resort Casino allows golfers the unique opportunity for a state-of-the-art golf experience while walking in the footsteps of history.

French Lick Resort Casino is a \$382 million historic restoration and casino development project that includes the French Lick Springs Hotel, the new French Lick Casino (both opening November 2006) and the West Baden Springs Hotel (opening spring 2007). When complete, this premier resort and casino destination will feature 684 guest rooms and suites; an 84,000-square-foot casino with a 42,000-square-foot, single-level gaming floor; 45 holes of golf, including the fully restored 1917-designed Donald Ross Course at French Lick and the new, 18-hole Pete Dye Course at French Lick (opening spring 2008); two full-service spas with a combined 36 treatment rooms totaling 41,000 square feet; and an array of dining and entertainment options.

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