



WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2012

serbia Serbs Up!

After more than three years' of delays, the first 18-hole golf course in Serbia is expected to break ground in the fall of 2012.

The course, to be designed by **Peter Harradine**, will take shape in Surcin, a western suburb of Belgrade, the nation's capital. It'll be the centerpiece of a 750-acre community along the Sava River that's been planned to include houses, a hotel, a spa, a retail/commercial area, the usual recreational amenities, and possibly a heliport. A report from a Serbian business group says that the community will also include a nine-hole course.

The community's name? Well, some sources call it Oasis Golf Club, but Harradine calls it Surcin Golf Club. It's been described as an "exclusive club of hedonists," but I'm sure that's just a glitch in Google's language translator.

The community is being developed by Belgrade-based El Golf, which is said to be a consortium of investors from Austria, Israel, and the United States. None of the group's principals has been identified, even though a string of news accounts about the project dates back to 2008. The news trail went cold until the spring of 2011, when the group announced that it's secured a 99-year lease on the government-owned site where the community will take shape.

Harradine, who's based Erlen, Switzerland, has been jet-hopping into and out of many European and Middle Eastern cities of late. Last year, he opened a course at the Pravets Golf & Spa Resort near Sofia, Bulgaria, and he's got a nine-hole course under construction at Meydan City in Dubai. In addition, he's been commissioned to design a nine-hole course in suburban Kiev, Ukraine and to add nine holes to a course in Russia.

As best I can determine, Harradine's course in Surcin will be the third in Serbia. The other courses are nine-hole tracks in Belgrade and Novi Sad.

Some information in this post originally appeared in the July 2011 and August 2011 issues of the World Edition of the Golf Course Report.