

## **CONSTRUCTION OF THE LARGEST GOLF COURSE IN GREECE HAS COMMENCED**

The founding ceremony for the new golf course of "[CRETAN GOLF S.A.](#)", which was held at Hersonissos Crete, signifies an important mark in the course of Greek tourism activities and in particular to Crete. The project was founded by the General Secretary of Public Administration Mr. Stavros Kambelis. When completed it will be the largest golf course in Greece and will add to the island's tourism and trade and upgrade its commercial status as a tourist destination attracting tourists of a higher income and will be a positive asset to extending the island's tourist season.

The golf course in Hersonissos is only 20 kilometres from the International Airport by ERGOKAT S.A. and is slated to begin operation in spring of 2003. It will have 18 runways and will cover a total expanse of 720.000 m<sup>2</sup>. The desert-style course will be Par 72 Championship Standard and 6400 yards long. There will be two driving ranges and a state of the Art Academy with practice putting greens and Short game practice area. Fours sets of tee positions on each hole will make it a challenging course for golfers of all levels. The course also comes with a full range of practice facilities for tourists, novice golfers and golf club members. It is being built by Greek Contractors and developed by a group of Local Investors (18 tourism related enterprises and organizations) and the city of Hersonissos.

Mr. Michael P. Vranas, President of the Board of Directors and Managing Director of CRETAN GOLF S.A., in his speech during the ceremony, mentioned that golf is one of the main elements indicating a country's structure. At first, golf was a sport which was addressed to a limited number of athletes, the affluent, but in the last ten years it has taken on mass dimensions. There are hundreds of golf courses in the developed coasts of Italy, France, Spain and Portugal, but also there has been an increase in countries which are under development such as Turkey, Egypt and Tunisia.

Mr. Vranas also mentioned that the Government has undertaken to subsidize the construction by 40% of the total cost and also pointed out that when the golf course is ready to operate it will be an asset for the extension of the tourist season and in upgrading the quality influx of higher income clients. "We also believe" said the President of [CRETAN GOLF S.A.](#), that it will be a motivation for the construction of other badly needed golf courses on our island". He also promised that the course will be ready by March 2003.

Mr. Bob Hunt, golf architect and Managing Director of PGA-Golf Management, commented that "This is an important site where we have followed our design philosophy of Environmental friendliness. Golf is the fastest developing sport in the world. There are more than 30.000 golf courses and more than 50.000.000 golfers worldwide. It is certainly one of the more important events in Greek tourism for many years." He also stated that as a desert-style course it will be in great demand by athletes.

Mr. Hunt also mentioned the fact that although three years ago the Government announced their intention to actively support investors in building golf courses, and although the international industry expected a mass production of such courses in Greece, the only one now under construction is the one in Crete.

[Cretan Golf](#) and Ergokat signed an agreement on May 21<sup>st</sup> 2001 and the construction of the golf course is now proceeding at a fast pace. President-Managing Director of the Board of Directors of CRETAN GOLF S.A, which was established on 11 August 1997 for the creation of golf courses, is Mr. Michalis Vranas, Mr. Zacharias Doxastakis is Vice-President, Mr. Andreas Metaxas, Managing Director, and members are messrs Manolas Fountoulakis, Kostas Mantonanakis, Michalis Tzirakis, Giorgos Sbokos, Stelios Leontarakis, Nikos Stefanakis, Themis Mountrakis, Ioannis Mountrakis and Theodoros Vasilakis.

Present at the ceremony were Deputies of Heraklion Prefecture, representatives of local authorities, of the Police Department, important local businessmen etc.

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