



MEDIA RELEASE

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IFA Hotels & Resorts Celebrates Official "Sod Turning" of Gary Player Designed Golf Course

The first construction milestone of the Zimbali Lakes Resort has been celebrated with the official 'Sod Turning' Ceremony of the Resort's keynote feature – the Gary Player Signature designed golf course that is being built by IFA Hotels & Resorts. The first sod was ceremoniously turned by Grand Slam golf icon, Gary Player.

This marks the second and major phase of development for joint venture partners IFA Hotels & Resorts and Tongaat Hulett Developments in greater Zimbali, following the Zimbali Coastal Resort, which has already earned acclaim as one of the world's finest resort and residential estates.

Signatory guests attending the Sod Turning Ceremony included MEC MPP, Michael Mabuyakhulu and local government dignitaries from Tourism KwaZulu-Natal, Trade and Investment KwaZulu-Natal, the Kwadukuza Municipalities and Ilembe District Municipality.

In his keynote address Gary Player welcomed Zimbali Lakes Resort to his global Design portfolio saying, "Since the early 80's we have been a worldwide leader in golf course design and we are driven by our proven ability to add substantial value to real estate and resort properties. Through the years, we have executed a portfolio of over 300 projects in 35 countries over 5 continents. Today we are proud to officially welcome Zimbali Lakes Resort to our portfolio and look forward to building on to the mutually rewarding relationship we have with IFA Hotels & Resorts for many years to come."

President of IFA Hotels & Resorts Africa and Indian Ocean, Wessel Witthuhn, responded by saying, "It is a pleasure to work alongside a team such as Gary Player Design who share IFA Hotels & Resorts' ethos and desire to enhance the intrinsic value and natural beauty of the KwaZulu-Natal north coast. The integration of this Gary Player Signature Golf Course within the exclusive residential and leisure Zimbali Lakes development introduces a new era for exceptional investment opportunities."

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The significance of the Gary Player Signature brand to KwaZulu-Natal will have a positive impact for tourism in the province. Since its establishment, the Zimbali Coastal Resort has already proven itself as one of the leading golf and residential estates and now with the introduction of the Gary Player brand, Zimbali Lakes Resort is destined to attract even greater aspiration as a sought-after destination.

MEC MPP, Michael Mabuyakhulu, said, "The KwaZulu-Natal province is proud to welcome a true South African golfing legend and the Gary Player Signature Golf Course to adorn our beautiful north coast. The prestige of the Gary Player brand coupled with yet another world-class golf, residential and commercial development by IFA Hotels & Resorts is a major tourism and economic contributor to our province."

The development of the course will take around 18 months of extensive earthworks in conjunction with conservation planning and indigenous planting to help control erosion during construction and to re-establish the natural flora. To ensure the processes and timelines run smoothly, full-time site personnel have now been appointed. A Gary Player Design Associate will also be on-hand to monitor all construction aspects and phases to ensure that the course is being built according to the design specifications that subtly intertwine it within the estate components, natural surroundings and magnificent man-made lakes. Sharing the same environmental ethos as IFA Hotels & Resorts, Gary Player Design has made it their core focus during the construction of the course to utilise environmentally sensitive building materials.

Jeff Lawrence, Senior Architect from Gary Player Design, comments, "Our design is inspired by the natural beauty of the KwaZulu-Natal region and emphasised by its breathtaking view of the Indian Ocean and surrounding topography, which together provide a wonderful opportunity for us to devise a stunning golf course for Zimbali Lakes Resort."

A target style golf concept will likely be implemented while creating an interesting variety through the utilization of natural land forms to capture and maximise views of the natural beauty. The key strengths capitalised on were the panoramic views and the dramatic elevation changes that are unique to the region. With respectful considerations for the environment, Gary Player Design has routed a golf course that will intrigue the imagination, while offering a fun and enjoyable golf experience. A wide variety of playable attributes, with an emphasis on shot values and course management, will be a driving factor in the design with forefront concepts including strategic elements, aesthetic beauty and playability.

Embracing what Mother Nature has provided, the course offers a fun, inviting, beautiful and memorable golf experience, while respecting the ecological assets of the site. Careful planning and ecologically sound design principals ensure that the golf elements work in harmony with nature. Respecting the sensitive riparian (wetland) areas, the course routing maximises the natural contours of the land, which suggests a target style golf course. Varying tee placements, carefully placed bunkers and generous landing areas will drive many of the design decisions.

A combination of traditional and revetted style bunkering will create interest, contrast and variety and ideally off-white bunker sand will be utilised to create a high visual impact and superior playing conditions. Platinum Paspalum grass will likely be chosen for the putting surfaces with other grass varieties being considered for the fairways. On completion, the course will boast distances of 6,880 yards for Championship, 6,320 yards for Back, 5,715 yards for Middle and 4,727 yards for Front with a par 71.

“Creative shaping and strategic design elements will present a unique and differing experience not yet realised at Zimbali or along the Dolphin Coast. We will be diligent in our efforts to produce a golf course that is user-friendly and most importantly encourages a golfing experience that is rewarding and memorable to Zimbali Lakes”, concluded Jeff Lawrence on behalf of Gary Player Design.

Ends.

ABOUT IFA HOTELS & RESORTS

IFA Hotels & Resorts is a leader in real estate development, specialising in premium mixed-use hotel and tourism resort projects throughout the Middle East, Europe, Africa, Asia, North America and the Indian Ocean region. IFA Hotels & Resorts offers exclusive branded residential, resort and hotel properties in exotic locations, with sound appreciating investment opportunities including hotel condominiums, vacation clubs and private residence clubs. IFA Hotel & Resorts' current portfolio consists of 46 projects in total, of which 18 are hotels, with over 11,500 keys across 12 countries in four continents.

www.ifahotelsresorts.com

ABOUT GARY PLAYER DESIGN

Established by Marc Player in the early 1980s and widely recognized as the most successful international golf course architectural firm in the world, Gary Player Design has branded over 300 layouts with the mark of a champion. Over its existence, the firm has worked on five continents and in over 35 countries, and prides itself on taking Gary Player and his design experience to emerging markets to help develop the game of golf globally. The company offers three tiers of golf course design brands, Black Knight Design™, Player Design™ and Gary Player Signature Design™ - of which Gary Player is personally involved in each Signature project. The cornerstone of Gary Player's design approach is to create playable and memorable golf courses within the constraints of a given site, while being ultra-sensitive to the surrounding environment. The result is a portfolio of award-winning and environmentally-recognized courses around the world, including the Top 3 Courses in South Africa and a multitude of Asian awards - most notably the Best Golf Course in both Hong Kong and Indonesia. Multiple rankings have also been received in the US by Golf Digest and Golf Magazine, and several courses in the US have been certified by the Audubon International as well for environmental stewardship.

www.garyplayerdesign.com

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