

Bulgaria Could be Europe's Next Golfing "Hotspot"

Real estate developers in Bulgaria have already woken up to the massive pulling power of top quality golf courses, experts say.

"Five signature courses - from the likes of Ian Woosnam, Jack Nicklaus and Gary Player - are planned," says Chris Goodall from English language magazine Quest Bulgaria.

"Developers here have recognised that by setting a course in an excellent location and combining it with additional quality attractions such as spas, wellness centres, horse riding, tennis and so on, gives year-round appeal. Golf is offering buyers the opportunity to buy top real estate not linked specifically to sea or ski."

With global golf tourism worth over GBP 10 B, Bulgaria has 12 new 18-hole courses in development or underway, with five due for completion by 2008. Of these five courses, 30% of the 2,300 residential units across them have already been sold.

Experts point out that Bulgaria is set to prosper from its all-new putting greens, given the success of Spanish and Portuguese golf developments and with low cost airlines further spurring golf development.

By 2020 nearly every third visitor to Europe will choose a central or Eastern European destination, according to the World Tourism Organisation.