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Panther National Preps To Pounce On The Palm Beach County Golf Scene This Fall

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Panther National begins to really take shape JASON NUTTLE PHOTOGRAPHY

While the Sunshine state is dotted with rock solid golf options, many Florida communities built around courses suffer from a dated

feel with pancake flat fairways choked by cookie-cutter homes and umpteen holes that feel like clones of each other. [Panther National](#), set to open this fall in Palm Beach Gardens, was born out of the same disdain for the status quo that gave us the Mosaic phosphate mine turned destination golf dreamscape that is [Streamsong](#).

Dominik Senn, founder and president of 4Sports & Entertainment, the management agency that represents Max Homa, Russell Henley and Webb Simpson among other golfers, had a vision for a high-end contemporary development that would be very unique to the market.

“Honestly, I got really bored with all these Florida golf courses that I was bouncing between that are flat back and forth. The only difference is who has a little bit better design and who manicures the fairways and greens better. It was time to create something different,” Senn said.

A former professional ski racer, Senn has a unique perspective on land forms, seeing them as pistes, plateaus, bowls and chutes. This may explain why his golf course unfolds in dramatic fashion with abundant elevation changes and rollicking drop zones. There is a par-5 measuring over 600 yards where striped tee balls can reach almost 400 yards on the roll. If you were to place a stretch of holes from Panther National on the downslope of St. Moritz, the new sections of black diamond runs would almost seamlessly blend in.

To ensure his alpine dreams remained grounded in the reality of championship golf, he enlisted an all-star course design duo. The goal was to avoid creating a course that prioritizes aesthetics over playability, as Senn stated, 'we are not building a Disney Land,' a course that may be an aesthetic tour de force but is 'unplayable'. Panther National National pairs golf legend Jack Nicklaus, who has designed over 300 courses worldwide along with Justin Thomas, a current star player, to bring a modern millennial sensibility to the project.

Senn praises the wellspring of course knowledge that Nicklaus, the 18-time major winner with architecture accolades that may even eclipse the Golden Bear's mammoth trophy haul, brings to the table. He's equally adamant about the vitalness of JT, a 15-time PGA Tour winner who lives in the area, who is also an investor in the project and was very keen to earn his debut design credit.

Unlike athletes keen on cashing in while keeping time commitments to the bare minimum, Thomas has appreciated course architecture since he took up the sport as a kid, often doodling fantasy holes on the back of napkins and has so far referred three leads that ended up purchasing properties.

“Most athletes just want to put their name and brand somewhere and they think that's the value of a couple million and they try to

minimize their visits per year. That's all the folks in sports, but with Justin Thomas, he was actually drawing courses as a seven-year-old," Senn adds.



From Left: Dominik Senn, Chris Cochran of Nicklaus Design, Justin Thomas and Jack Nicklaus at ... [+] PANTHER NATIONAL

No. 11, the aforementioned 650-yard from the tips, humdinger of a par-5, provides an illustration of JT's input in action.

"We worked that hole two times over with Jack and then Justin came out on a third visit. Prior to Justin we had a landing area at 300 yards that fell downhill quickly and we had a water hazard you couldn't see off the tee," Panther National's director of agronomy Steve Ehrbar said.

Thomas commented that the current setup created a par-5 where most players would be forced to hit back-to-back 3-wood ahead of a 100-yard approach shot to the green as a result of the water being out of view and as result, the hazard was repositioned.

“If you turn your tee shot over you get rewarded to where it’s going to go downhill and you might get it out to 340 yards and have a potential shot to get there in two and make eagle. Justin has had a lot of good input throughout his visits and talking to Jack about how far guys hit the ball nowadays,” Ehrbar added.

There are a couple drive-able par 4s on the layout too, provided of course a player can muster the rare alchemy of perfect contact coupled with the requisite clubhead speed to make it happen.

It took the Swiss developer five years of meticulous location scouting before stumbling upon the 400-acre plot of land, previously part of a cattle ranch, that is currently being transformed into Panther National. The land is enveloped by a vast 2,400-acre natural conservation area and preserve.

The exclusive private golf club community, the largest parcel within the northern tier of the master planned [Avenir development](#), will feature 218 single family homes starting at \$4 million.



A rendering of the clubhouse at Panther National PANTHER NATIONAL

The exclusive club is aiming for 250-270 members and requires footing an initiation fee comparable to the base price of a Ferrari Purosangue. So far, in just under a year, they've sold \$200 million worth of property, indicating the current Florida golf boom is still going strong. Other highly anticipated private developments, such as the [Apogee Club](#) in Hobe Sound and [Shell Bay](#) in Hallandale Beach, are also under construction.

Miami starchitect Max Strang has been tapped to put his trademark environmental modernism stamp on Panther National's club facilities and residences with extensive use of glass. They are also working with select luxury [custom homebuilders](#).

Adjacent to the golf course is a nine-hole short course as well as a 33,000 square foot putting course. Additional amenities include a lifestyle center with spa and fitness facilities, multiple swimming

pools, pickleball and tennis courts along with walking and cycling trails running through the conservation area. Once fully built out Panther National will be stay-and-play destination primarily catering to second and third home occupants. The surrounding vicinity will also see the development of 2 million square feet of commercial space, including retail, restaurants, supermarkets, police and fire services, and a [hospital](#).