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GOLF: DUBAI'S UP TO SCRATCH; IRISH DAILY MIRROR TRAVEL

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DUBAI has undergone an incredible rate of redevelopment in the last decade, and one of the growing interests is in golf tourism.

The newest addition to Dubai's golfing attractions is the magnificent Al Badia 18-hole championship **golf course** built on the banks of Dubai Creek, home to the newly **developed** Dubai Festival City.

The 7,250-yard, par-72 course, designed by internationally renowned golf architect Robert Trent Jones II, has turned barren desert into a lush green oasis which provides a stark contrast to the distant horizon lined with skyscrapers.

The course is visually stunning with its use of water, sculpted fairways and rivers of sand.

"Al Badia is another addition to Dubai's growing golf attractions and will become a must-play course for residents of the Emirates and visitors to Dubai," says Roger Morris, general manager of Al Badia, who hopes to have the course ranked as the top course in Dubai, if not in the Emirates.

Al Badia, meaning 'Land of the Bedouins', is literally where nature meets the desert. The designers have recreated the feel of Arabia with careful use of indigenous plants covering 85 acres of turf.

"The use of paspalum grass means the million gallons of water a day needed to irrigate the course is one third less than that required with conventional grass," explains Morris. "Players will be in awe at how rich and green the course is in contrast to the desert terrain which was its starting point."

Course architect Robert Trent Jones II says two of Al Badia's holes are among the most challenging he has designed to date. Trent Jones, whose company has designed over 220 courses in 38 countries and won over 100 awards, says holes five and 18 will be among the most the most challenging in the world. . . .

Multiple tees can be found on every hole with most offering a variety in teeing angle. This means that the course can be played from a maximum of just over 7,250 yards for championship quality players down to roughly 5,500 yards for players with less skill or strength. Golfers wishing to play the Al Badia course should have a handicap of 28 or lower for men and 36 or lower for ladies.

Al Badia Golf Course can be enjoyed during a stay in Dubai Festival City, a sparkling new waterfront city. The course will become part of the new Four Seasons Golf and Country Club, which opens early in 2007. The Country Club will include tennis and squash courts as well as beauty, spa, massage, wellness and lifestyle rooms.